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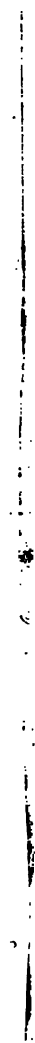
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QUITE ANOTHER STORY

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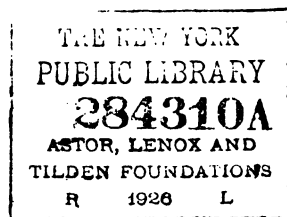
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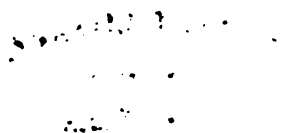
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PART I.



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QUITE ANOTHER STORY.

CHAPTER I.

HIS LITTLE CART.

THE Squire was almost as young as a squire could be to live in his own house and be his own master. Twenty-one years old was the Squire, and—seven months.

“And I thought, sir, as you’ve a way of talking with a man that seems to do him good—not but what it’s a commanding way too, now and then ; and this poor fellow lives in one of your own cottages at present (worse luck), you’d may be not think it a liberty——”

“No,” answered the Squire, when there was a pause, “not at all.”

It was the head gardener who had spoken, and with a certain air of deference had stopped short at the word “liberty.”

The Squire stood stock still, looking on while his head gardener cut two or three of the first ripe

bunches of grapes and laid them on a flat basket.

"You see, sir, he's a married man," he continued, perceiving that more would have to be said ; "and you being that observant and that investigating of all the tenants on the estate, I thought as you'd like to know it was no fault of his ; and he such a respectable man, and came hundreds of miles to take that place. And the money that used to be spent on them hot-houses, and the orchid-house, and such, never was anything like it ! And there, one fine morning if they didn't hear as the master had gone bankrupt right away in his town-house, and before they knew where they were they got turned out, and he was sold up, and had to fly the country."

"Well, I shall probably go and see him," said the Squire, not displeased at the hint that he had an agreeable and possibly a commanding manner with him. "A manner that the people like," he considered with himself, "goes a long way."

"And so there he is," continued the gardener ; "such an eddication as he had, too—knows Latin and all ; been living on what he had saved for this ten months-past ; not earned a single shilling, and had rheumatic fever as well."

The gardener was respectful, and gave himself the air of talking as a man to a man.

This was wise. To have thought of the Squire as a boy, a very pretty boy, even a beautiful boy, would, from whomsoever the thought had come, have hurt his youthful dignity very much if he could have known it, and to record such a thought

in print would not be fair, or indeed necessary, for the youngest man, however full of fun, however fond of schoolboy games and jollity, cannot be said to be too young for more than such a very little while that the end of it is likely to be reached about the same time that its existence had become certain.

"Oh, this is a case for charity, then?" he inquired.

"Well, sir, there's giving as you may call charity," said the gardener; "and then, again, there's giving that isn't. I don't say as this is a case where a gentleman might put his hand in his waistcoat pocket and fork out half-a-crown. But, dear me, if a goldian sovereign might happen (not to take too great a liberty) to be what a gentleman chose to fork out, it might seem a sort of a compliment, for you know Latin, sir, and so does he. But really, sir, if you hadn't asked me out and out——"

The Squire nodded and very shortly withdrew, not at all aware that his head gardener had *sent* him to look after a brother gardener, and had also let him know that he was to give the same a sovereign.

The gardener looked after him as he went back to the house with a disconsolate, loitering air.

"Dull for the present," he remarked, shaking his head as he came out of the grape-house, "and no wonder, his father not dead a month. Well, things in this world come about strangely. *He* was one that would have been a real blessing all round.

And then to think that within a week of his old second cousin's burying—that had never been the least good or comfort or credit to any living soul, kept his heir so shameful short, too, grudged the very vines their fuel and the horses their oats—he should be ordained to foller, and leave this here school-boyish, this here larky, polo-playing, cricketing lad, that's been mostly brought up in London, too, for to rule and reign in his stead. Well, but he has his notions; feels as though it wouldn't be proper like to have his jolly young companions about him yet awhile, and there he's right."

"Ah, here it is," said the Squire, when he was walking up a country road some short time after. "I remember that this is the place, a sort of high-shouldered, humpy-looking cottage, with great clumps of houseleek and that yellow flowering stuff all over the roof, and tangles of honeysuckle hanging about the casements."

He undid the garden latch. A pale man was sitting on a chair in the little garden, and a tiny child, perhaps between three and four years old, was playing near him.

It was one of the first visits the Squire had paid, and it gave great satisfaction. The artful and kindly gardener was responsible for a manner "that seemed to do a man good." He tried it then for the first time, having had previously what may be called no manner in particular.

The poor scientific ex-head gardener took a pleasure in telling of his misfortunes, of his loss of situation, and then of his long illness.

The Squire replied that he had heard of these, and added some of his own head gardener's appreciative words.

"I am very much obliged to Mr. Callender," was the answer ; "and a most respectable man he is, sir, too—one to be thoroughly relied on. Science is not everything, sir. No, and not all a man may have learned sets him much above the best of those thorough-going, conscientious men of the old school."

The Squire was much impressed by this patronizing tone, but then it was a testimony, too. So it did not lower Mr. Callender in his opinion, though, together with several other things said by the poor man, it did make it uncommonly difficult to give the sovereign. In fact, he stammered and even blushed over this embarrassing affair, and the color rose in the head gardener's hollow cheek when he began to understand what was coming. But he rose and accepted the gift.

It was balm to see this handsome young fellow so utterly out of countenance. He let him know that this was the first time he had ever been offered an alms, but he thanked him, less for what he had given, though that was very acceptable, than for his way of doing it.

This "way of doing it" had also been in some sort suggested by Mr. Callender. The Squire did not actually say, "For you know Latin, and so do I," but he managed to hint that it was but natural for a fellow who was well educated to sympathize

with another educated man when things did not go well with him.

When the Squire took leave he walked up the road with his hands in his pockets, looking more boyish than usual, yet feeling slightly pleased with himself.

"I shall do something more for that poor fellow. I think I shall take to philanthropy," he remarked, as he sent a stone skipping across a wayside pond in the clever fashion that boys call ducks and drakes. "My father would have liked it. Hey! —What!—Mrs. E. Smith? Did he say Mrs. E. Smith was his first employer, and that there he married his wife, who was an English woman, her sewing maid? What if that should be Daisy? Why should it be though? There must be fifty Mrs. E. Smiths who have head gardeners. Widows are there? Why a widow? Because if not he would have said Mr. E. Smith, and I am sure he talked about 'that corner of Scotland.' Daisy would send him a 'fiver,' I know, if I asked her, for she is as rich as she is fat, and she has only those two plagues of spoilt pug-nosed girls to spend money on. She would recommend him too. I'll ascertain it."

No sooner thought than acted on. The Squire ran back, put his hand on the top of the little two-foot wall, which was all that divided that cottage garden from the road, and jumped over. He did notice that something cracked and came to a squash under one of his feet; but was surprised when the head gardener's tiny boy came running

up with woe-begone tears and wailings, and had seized him by the leg almost before he knew what he had done. Then he found that he had crushed the most trumpery little wooden cart that ever was sold for a half-penny, a cart made of very thin chips of wood, and ornamented with small dabs of green and red paint.

The father and mother were one on either side excusing him, and scolding the poor baby before he had accosted them. "Thee little fool," cried the mother sharply, while the baby with loud lamentations let piteous tears bedew the ruined toy. The father spoke roughly, and then when our young Squire had asked his question, and it actually appeared that Mrs. E. Smith was his own cousin, this excellent parent had no patience with his poor little bereaved offspring, but sternly ordered the chubby young mother to "carry off that brat," which she prepared to do, saying as she lifted him up in her arms, and tried to quiet his howls—

"Gentleman did not go for to do it, Natty dear."

She dried his tears with his pinafore.

"Poor little chap," said the Squire. "No; I did not do it on purpose. There, don't cry. I'll give you another cart some day soon. Yes, I will," he continued, nodding, for the child, who was in course of being carried off by his mother, looked back at him over her shoulder, heaved a long sob, and was pacified.

He had the fragments of his precious halfpenny-worth tightly clasped in his little fists; and while the Squire continued to talk, letting the father

know that he should see Mrs. E. Smith in a few days, for he was going to pay a visit up in her part of Scotland, he saw "Natty" proceed to lay these down in a row on the cottage floor with deep interest and attention. They had constituted his only toy, and perhaps he thought a cart that was smashed to bits was, nevertheless, better than no cart at all.

This second visit raised some exciting hopes in the mind of the pale-faced gardener. He felt that in all probability it would be worth another sovereign to him, if not more, and as he had accepted the first he half unconsciously perceived that he had already borne the sting which to be a recipient of charity could inflict, and that at least, so long as he had no situation, and no strength to take one, a second benefaction would cost him no more, particularly if it came from the same family, and was given, as it would be in this case, with equal delicacy. He had never heard of the common French proverb, "*Ce n'est que le premier qui coute,*" but it expressed his feeling perfectly.

Yes, the Squire went away this second time pledged to remember the case of her late head gardener, and explain it to Daisy, otherwise Mrs. E. Smith; also to ask her if she would write him a good recommendation so soon as he should be strong enough to look after another situation.

As the Squire went along towards home he passed the smallest of humble cottage shops; a few spades stood outside, a couple of scythes swathed in hay-bands, and some common grass hats. In

the window some loaves of bread, some sugar with a great many flies on it, and in one pane some Dutch dolls, and some little wooden carts, like, but much grander than, the one he had smashed ; in fact, it may be supposed that these would stand the purchaser in at least twopence apiece.

"That's the sort of article," he considered. "I shall not forget it ; but to buy one and go back with it for the third time would really be too ridiculous. The little chap must wait, of course, till the next time I pass. I shall be coming this way very shortly."

It so chanced, indeed, that he passed down that lane again the very day after, and his cousin, Mrs. E. Smith, hearing from a neighbor of his intended visit, wrote and asked him to spend a couple of days with her previously to the one already fixed. He telegraphed to say that he would come, and in the afternoon followed himself to the railway station. He was on horseback, but as he approached the high-shouldered cottage the gardener's tiny boy darted out, ran to the wicket gate, and gazed at him with eager attention. He had not time to stop, but he nodded kindly and went on.

Now he really was a good-natured young fellow, and when he got to his cousin's house he did not forget the gardener, but got that matter off his mind before he began to play polo, and otherwise amuse himself.

He had decided by this time to go in for philanthropy, but was reasonable enough to feel that no future philanthropic scheme could possibly be

expected to answer as this one had done. This was a lucky accident, but it decidedly added to his pleasure during this absence from home. He prolonged it rather more than he had intended, not, in fact, returning till some days past the fortnight, and bringing with him a letter of high interest to the ex-head gardener which he meant to deliver himself.

At the station, while the groom was coming up with his horse, he heard the soft tang of a church bell—again.

“What is that bell?” he asked of the guard.

“I expect it’s a funeral,” he was answered, as the man got again into the carriage. “I know there is one in the village to-day, but I think it is but for a child.”

And so then the train went off, and he presently rode down the shady lane towards the gardener’s cottage. He was both boyish enough and kindly enough to feel very proud of the letter he had to give. It contained not only the “fiver” he had in some degree counted on, but Daisy’s head gardener having lately been found out in certain delinquencies and peculations, had met with rather an abrupt dismissal, and this letter actually set forth that if Evan Fraser was well enough to take the situation, he might in a few weeks have it back again ; for, as Mrs. E. Smith explained to the Squire, she had never had a man about the place who was so competent, sober, and straightforward, in short, whom she liked so well.

Tang went the bell. What a lovely afternoon it

was. He stopped at the gardener's wicket gate. The door of the cottage was wide open, and the sun streamed in. He alighted, and a respectable cottager came out with a baby in her arms. He asked where the gardener and his wife were.

"Gone to the funeral, sir," she answered with a curtsy, "and I said I would take care of the baby. It's their little boy, sir."

"Oh, I am sorry," said the Squire. "Poor people."

"She takes on for the present, sir, no doubt, and so does he, for the matter of that; but children are a great expense, and poor folks can't mourn 'em as gentlefolks do."

"Why I promised that little fellow a cart," exclaimed the Squire. "I little thought he would not live to play with it."

"Oh, ay, sir," quoth the cottage dame, "he often talked o' that cart as you was to give him. 'Never you fear, Natty,' his mother 'd say; 'gentleman won't forget 'ee.'"

"I might have sent a cart by parcel's post," thought the Squire. "Why, it would have been no trouble in the world. I wish I had."

"Was the child ill many days?" he asked.

"Nigh a week," sir, replied the woman. "Died last Sunday just at sunrise."

"Or I might have sent stamps to the mother, and told her to buy him one," thought the Squire. "Why didn't I?"

"His father came round to me at dawn," continued the woman. "He called me, and says he,

‘I wish you would come to us, he says ; ‘I’m afraid it’s very near over with the child.’ I up and went, and as we went up the stairs rather hasty, for his mother called to us, he maybe heard the door go, and he opened his eyes and says, as clear as could be, ‘Mammy, is that my cart come ?’ Yes, sir, his mother frets, but I tell her she shouldn’t. There’s many troubles in this world, and it’s a blessed thing to be out o’ them so early. Those was about the last words he spoke, and passed away he did as gently as could be.”

The Squire did not say a word, but advanced to the round deal table, and laid the letter he had brought upon it.

“Thank you kindly, sir,” said the woman, as he took out his purse and put money in her hand. “I’ll see that Mr. Fraser has your letter when they come back.”

After that he rode home. He did not exactly think that he would not meddle any more with philanthropy, but he did remember that if he had not gone out of his way to befriend the father, he should never have trampled on the child’s toy.

It seemed hard upon him. He almost hated that woman for telling him. Poetical justice had not been meted out to him, for he had attended to the great matter, and the man’s future was provided for ; what he was storming against as he rode, was the unfairness of circumstance which had made *him* the cause of such disappointment to the little child.

“How was I to know that this trumpery toy

must be given at once," he exclaimed, "or I should never have another chance?"

Events were severe upon him. And he had been so much pleased with himself. However, he had shortly the grace to admit that no one else was really to blame. There was an uncomfortable sort of lump in his throat, and when he alighted at his own house he went into his special smoking-den and locked the door.

Well?

Well, that's all. How can what he may have done in that smoking-room be nay one's affair but his own?

II.

DAISY THE SECOND.

THE Squire's Christian name was Andrew. He did not like his name, partly because his brothers had generally called him And. They now frequently called him "Squire," and he liked this still less. He had four brothers, and no sisters at all. He was himself a handsome and very well-proportioned youth, slightly below the middle height. He had fine eyes of bluish-gray, very dark hair, thick black eyebrows, good teeth, a clear, rather pale, complexion, and a very agreeable expression. He had as yet a slightly hesitating, somewhat doubtful manner, as if he did not feel sure of himself, and did not always remember that the days of discipline in his case were over. This was not his fault.

The description given above of his person and manners would do just as well for all his brothers but one. They were remarkably alike. The youngest was seven years old, one was fourteen, and one was sixteen. The one who was not like was only eleven months younger than the Squire. He was nearly a head taller, a great deal stronger, rougher, darker, and vastly more clever. He was plain. He naturally and inevitably led when he

cared to do so. He had a voice already deep and decided. To be sure it creaked, and had a crack in it still now and then. But oh ! how he could shout when he chose.

His mother, Mrs. Andrew Capper, was decidedly afraid of him, for he almost always knew what she was thinking of. It seemed a fine dispensation of Providence that she had one of her more manageable sons as the heir, but then she knew she could have done a great deal more with him but for Fergus her second son. He did not exactly appear to think she was scheming or shamming, or even trying unduly to influence their taste, but when she would say before her sons such things as, "I met dear Mrs. Blank to-day ; how sweet and distinguished she is," Fergus would exclaim, "Oh, mother, I wonder you think so. I think she is a horrid old screw."

And then Andrew would break in with—

"Well, though she is so rich, she used never to give a fellow a tip, years ago."

"I shall be much annoyed," the mother would add, "if you are not pleasant to her, or if you have any such thought as that she is—parsimonious."

"Ah, well," Fergus would reply ; "but it does not matter now whether she is or not. We shall not trouble ourselves ; shall we Martin ? *Him big brother can tip him now.*"

Martin, the youngest of the family, having been tipped by Andrew on his birthday, had changed the sovereign into sixty fourpenny pieces, and had

not been at all frugal in the spending of them. All the brothers, in fact, perceived with startling readiness that the money in Andrew's pocket was only in a certain insignificant sense more his than theirs. It was to send Fergus to Cambridge, and keep the two next at Winchester. As for the mother, she would have managed to come and live with her son in his house, but that on reflection she had felt that for all her efforts she might not be able to prevent his marrying young. In such a case it would have been bitter to turn out, so she elected to accept the Dower house, which was a pleasant old gabled residence, not a quarter of a mile from his gates. Her husband had died so soon after he inherited the estate, that he had not even been able to make a will, but to this house her son made her most welcome. She came and stayed with him as a matter of course till it was ready.

"And what a delightful thing it is, dears, isn't it?" she remarked, as she sat at the head of his table one day, and dispensed an early dinner to them all. "What a delightful thing that dear Cousin Daisy should propose herself so soon as a visitor. And the girls, the dear girls, how nice it will be for you all to take them about over Andy's own park and woods."

"Oh, mother!" exclaimed Fergus, and said no more.

"Delightful!" persisted Mrs. Capper.

"We shall do it, as we have to do it, I suppose," said Andrew, rather disconsolately: "but as to being delightful, mother—"

"Well," observed Fergus, "but you know, old man, you did say they were not so fat as they used to be. It's a pity they are so re—mark—ably plain."

"In your opinion," the mother put in. "I think, my dear, you are peculiar; other people think they will be charming."

"And Daisy will have ten thousand a year, and Bell two thousand."

"As if that could have anything to do with it!" said Mrs. Capper sharply.

Then Andrew said—

"I suppose, mamma, I am not expected to drag them all over the country, am I?"

"I suppose, my dear, you understand the duties of hospitality?"

"Ye—es."

"Cousin Daisy was most hospitable to you."

"Ye—es. But what put it into her head to come so soon for, I can't think."

"I know," said Fergus. "They have been yachting with those friends of theirs, both the girls were sick, and hated it; so she let them land her and them at Folkestone. Well, I was at Fraser's, her sick gardener's this morning, and he said his folks had written to him that scarlatina had broken out at her very lodge. She knows this before now. Such a coward as Cousin Daisy is would never take them there; so as this place is not fifty miles from Folkestone, I believe she thought she would take a look at it on her way to wherever she will have to go with them."

The mother, who had felt surprised, accepted this solution of her difficulty.

"Well," she said with suavity, "as Daisy was always such a favorite of yours, and none of the younger ones ride well enough yet to go about with her (how well she always looks on her pony, dear girl), perhaps you might take her for her rides instead of And, as he does not care about it."

Fergus appeared struck with astonishment, but only for a moment, then his dark countenance cleared.

"Her mother would not let me, mamma," he said pointedly; "I think you forget that." Then he added in a cogitative tone, "But she might not mind Andy so much."

Mrs. Capper's fine blue eyes flashed angrily, but Fergus was not looking at her. The faces of all his brothers, excepting the little one, took on an air of intelligence; this last was deep in a large quantity of strawberries with which Andrew had heaped his plate.

"Is it Daisy or Bell whose gloves fit you, And?" Fergus went on.

"Daisy put on mine when I was up there, and they were only a little too long in the fingers. But remember, you fellows," he replied, looking round the table, "I think I shall like having visitors. I mean to be very hospitable, and all that." His little brother now looked up. "As for you, Martin," he continued, "if ever you let out a single word" ("Or even a wink," put in Tom, the next boy) "as to my having said Bell was a shocking muff, or

that I did not want to ride with girls that were not grown up, you'll catch it, that's all."

"Won't you," added Fergus ; " I wouldn't be you."

A few moments after this Mrs. Capper withdrew to see a tradesman in the library, and the brothers began to *chaff* and torment each other—good-naturedly enough, but in a provoking style to Andrew, who came in for most of their jokes. Tom had got Cousin's Daisy's letter, in which she proposed to come and partake of his hospitality ; he was reading it aloud, with certain portions interpolated.

" Shut up ! " shouted Andrew, springing from his chair and making after him.

Tom darted under the table, the letter still in his keeping ; the cloth swung wildly from side to side.

" Go it, And ! go it, Tom ! " shouted the others.

Then Andrew, not able to catch the delinquent, who jumped on to a chair and spouted the rest of the letter, while the others held *him* back, suddenly seized a sofa cushion and flung it at Tom with all his might. But Tom was even with him ; he ducked his head just in time, and the cushion went straight at the chimney-piece. There was a tremendous crash, a great china vase toppled over against the clock glass, broke it, and rolled over on to the hearth, the clock after it, and the vase went into twenty pieces.

For an instant there was dead silence ; the boys looked at one another ; then the younger ones, ~~pearing~~ as they thought a step in the hall, kicked

the whole of the *débris* under a quantity of ornamental shavings that were lying on the hearth, shook them out, and pulled a companion vase into the centre of the chimney-piece, so that all would have been concealed but that the clock gasped and actually began to strike under the shavings.

In the meantime Andrew stood for a few seconds almost aghast, till Fergus, coming up to him, looked him hard in the eyes and whispered.

"You great gowk! what do you mean? It's YOUR OWN CLOCK, ISN'T IT? IT'S YOUR OWN VASE."

With a flash Andrew took in the situation. The step drew near; not Mrs. Capper, but the stately old butler entered.

"Saunders," said Andrew, suavely, pointing to the hearth, "I rather think there's something queer under those shavings."

"Indeed, sir," exclaimed Saunders, "there's no doubt of it!"

"If you'll believe me," he said, some hours after, when describing this scene to Mr. Callender, "I never was so truly taken aback in my life. I lifted up the shavings, for underneath them I heard the clock running down like mad! And there it was with one hand off, all its china face cracked, and the great Worcester vase smashed to flinders. All the younger ones were as 'twere sitting in judgment round. I reckon they had been having some sort of a *shindy*, for sofa cushions were lying about. 'What's the vally of a chimney ornament that won't even stand a cushion so soft as that,' says the young master, 'it passes my wits to eventuate. When we are all gone out, and not before, you'll

have this mess cleared away, Saunders, and I never wish to hear any more about it.' 'Very good, sir,' said I. I knew well enough he meant that whichever of them had done it the missis was not to know."

"She's rather hard on those boys," said Mr. Callender, shaking his head; "but, take my word for it, Mr. Saunders, sir, it's a mistake; it's not the woman's place to keep such a tight hand over the other sort after childhood."

"So I say," quoth Mr. Saunders, in full assent. "When they find out that the world was made a sight more for them than for their ma, it will be the worst for her, and a more lamentuous thing for them than if they'd been allowed an earlier terminology of their schooling."

"Ah," said the gardener with a sigh, meant to express still more fervent assent.

"And so," continued Mr. Saunders, the time-piece with the Flora sitting atop of it all over wreaths and garlands is gone forever. I've wound it up every Wednesday morning this twenty years, and this is about the biggest piece of it that's left, except the works." He drew from one of his pockets a china head broken short off at the neck. It had a somewhat smirking expression, and was crowned with roses. "The young master took no more care upon the loss of that clock than if it had been a common cuckoo one bought at a fair for six shillings."

"Mr. Saunders, sir," replied the gardener, "let well alone. I'm content. We've had enough, ay,

and by your leave a great deal too much, o' the opposite style."

"We have, Mr. Callender; and now the old Squire has affectuated his exeunt, I'm agreeable to admit it, though I was not while I took his money and his meat."

With this praiseworthy sentiment the conversation ended, and, so far as is known, Mrs. Capper never heard a word about that clock and that vase to the end of her days.

And Cousin Daisy in due time made her appearance, being met at the station and brought on, as well as her girls, with all possible cordiality. The young Squire was now to play the host for the very first time. It would have been odd, though not a specially thoughtful fellow, if he had not thought then on the changes in his lot. Not three months since, his father being desperately ill, and scarcely able to give an opinion as to what should be done for him, Andrew had helped his mother to sell a good deal of what plate she possessed; then she had taken all his sons down with him to Brighton, leaving, as she thought for a time, the modest house in Bloomsbury where they had been brought up. He had been a long time an invalid; at Brighton he died, just a week after the cousin to whom he was heir.

What straits Andrew and his mother had gone through together; how brave she had been! And all on a sudden this was more than over for him. Life almost in a day had been turned the sunny side outwards. Abundance of money, the joy of

patronage, a fine house, servants, horses; liberty and everybody, even his mother, smiled on him.

Mrs. E. Smith met the newly-made widow with a few affectionate tears. She was tall and stout, with somewhat blowsy light hair, and a most amiable expression; whereas Mrs. Capper was a model of elegant neatness and maternal good looks in her handsome weeds, which just suited her clear-cut features and dark blue eyes.

Perhaps Mrs. E. Smith and Mrs. Capper would both have been equally surprised if they could have heard their girls and boys discoursing together the next day, as they sat on a bank at the outskirts of a little wood. The whole party at first were together, but shortly the three younger contrived to absent themselves—Tom first, the next boy after him, and then the little one.

“Oh, isn’t he a sweet fellow!” said Daisy, the elder of the girls, looking after this last. “When he looks up how beautiful his long eyelashes are, and what dark violet eyes.”

“Yes,” said Andrew, with the strict moderation of a brother; “he’s not a bad lot.”

“He never gets in the way,” added Fergus, dispassionately. “I like him the best of those young ’uns. Children are so jolly innocent.”

“And he’s so pretty,” said Daisy.

“What does that signify for a boy?”

“I think it signifies for every one. You know very well that we should like to have eyes like those.”

“Why, what’s the matter with your eyes?” ex-

claimed Fergus, not knowing very well what else to say.

"They are too light—they are hardly blue at all; it is ugly to have such light eyes and light eyebrows, you know it is."

"It does not follow that other people think so because you do."

"However," remarked Bell, "now we have made up our minds to give up everything, it does not so much signify."

"What do you mean?"

"Why you know very well," said Daisy, "that it would be hateful to be married for one's money."

"Married!" exclaimed Fergus. "Why you are only sixteen and a half yet, and Bell is a year younger. You have no occasion to think about being married for years."

"Ah," said Daisy, significantly. "And you know you used to tell Bell that if she was always crying nobody would marry her; you often said nobody would have her on any account."

"So I did," said Fergus, with an air of conviction.

"If we tell you this you are not to say anything about it," continued Daisy.

"Well," said Andrew, "agreed. Go it then."

"For," continued Daisy, "you are much the most *relationy* of all our cousins, and you know. And, you said when you were in Scotland that we were quite as tall and as big, in fact, as most girls who are really grown up."

"I said that to Bell. I said how ridiculous it

was that a girl as big as most women should cry over a sick puppy."

"And you said we looked older for our age than most girls. All the other cousins think so. Why the Mitfords, and the Hitchcocks, and the Deans all make love to us, though they are none of them older than you two. At least they say when the others do not hear that we are sweet creatures -- "

"Oh, yes, they've made us offers, both of us," said Bell, nodding, "and Tommy Hitchcock told Daisy his was an *involuntary flame*."

The two brothers shouted with laughter, and the girls joined in.

"Oh, how displeased mother would be if she knew."

"Tom Hitchcock is a mercenary little toad," exclaimed Andrew; "and, as regards your mother, Daisy, why doesn't she know?"

"Well," said Daisy, "we could not make up our minds about that at first—we thought it was so silly of them; but other people have done it too, particularly to me."

She paused.

"Poor little girls," exclaimed Andrew, becoming quite manly all on a sudden. "It's a shame."

"For they can't all really love us."

"Of course not," said Fergus, with decision.

"And the more we thought about it, the more we were sure that none of them did, because we are so very plain—besides being so young. And Bell was unhappy that night before we went on board the yacht."

"I thought it would be so affecting," Bell broke in, "if one of us never came back. Boo—oo—oo." Both brothers sat bolt upright.

"Bell, how dare you!" exclaimed Andrew. "Fifteen and a half, and not left off that *Boo* yet. You are the greatest goose I ever heard of."

Bell sniffed, dried her eyes, and excused herself. "People do fall overboard sometimes, and I was afraid Daisy might."

"Now, look out! no doing it again."

"So," said Daisy, "we made a sort of—not exactly vow, but a very serious resolution, that neither of us would ever marry at all."

"You are two geese—goslings, I mean. What was the good of that?"

"Why, if we had been married, of course it would have been for our money, and so most likely *they* would have been unkind to us; but now you see we shall be quite free, and we can be high-minded. We wish to be high-minded, and do good, and be benevolent."

"High-minded and benevolent," said Fergus. "Oh!"

"Don't you want to be high-minded?"

"No, I don't. I want to travel; I wish to see the world."

"I am sure Andrew does. Look how kind he was about Evan Fraser; what pains he took."

"I don't think you will find it half so easy to do real good as you suppose," said Andrew, remembering the little cart.

"Well, we shall see when we come of age."

"Oh, you don't want to be high-minded, whatever that is, till you come of age?"

"No; we shall have nothing to be high-minded with. Mother sets aside a proportion of our property to be given away, but there is always great consultation as to what will be the best charities, and how it is to be spent; that sort of thing is not interesting, and then it does not seem to be our giving. But it is true that mother has been a good deal cheated herself, and does not find it easy to do good."

"She told me so."

"And some of the people say clever things. It appears when they talk as if they would have been better off if she had let them alone."

III

PHILANTHROPY AGAIN.

"BETTER off if Cousin Daisy had done nothing for them," exclaimed Fergus; "well that was hard. They must be clever indeed if they can make her believe that."

"Yes, they are clever; but really some of the things they said were quite true. Now, there was the wearing of shoes and stockings."

"Well, tell us about that."

"Mother has a little school for the more respectable cotters' children, and she promised to get the girls good places, and put out the boys to trades, on consideration that they were to wear shoes and stockings. Their fathers and mothers never did, and mother said they could not get on in consequence. She could not have these *bairns* running about in our house with bare feet. First the parents said everybody would laugh at them if they did it. However, that was got over. Mother said she would give the stockings and shoes, and let them all practise their singing in our corridor, where the great organ is, and look at the great maps and pictures and things. And the girls, she said, should see what a gentleman's house is like (as they were to go to service), and learn what carpets and china and glass are. They did not even know the names

of such things. And the boys were, besides, to see the stables and the greenhouses."

"I know," observed Andrew ; "and how the servants snubbed them."

"Yes. So they put the boots and stockings on, but when mother was away they did not wear them. She found it out, and the parents said the nasty foot-gear cramped their feet, and made them so cold that they could not bear it. They were often obliged to take all off and give their feet a rub. So then if it was only a few miles from home, it was not worth the *fash* of putting them on again, and they just carried them and ran home barefoot and comfortable. But after that," continued Daisy, "there came a time when dear mother was very unhappy. Five of the children died—three girls and two boys."

"Not in consequence of wearing shoes and stockings !" exclaimed Andrew, "that is impossible."

"But I'm afraid it was. As they grew used to wearing them, they did not take them off, and so in the winter, when they went over the burns, *through* them I mean, or over the mosses, their feet were almost always wet, sometimes wet the whole day, and they got awful coughs and colds. They never used to have colds when they went barefoot, for as soon as they were out of the water their feet got dry and warm ; now the wet stockings turned cold, and did not dry. Two died of inflammation, and those others died the next summer of consumption, but their fathers and mothers

always said it was the shoes and stockings, and perhaps it was."

"*Perhaps!* But why is Cousin Daisy so anxious to take them away from their native glen?" said Fergus. "The cotters are happy enough; why must they needs be raised and civilized?"

"Oh, because of the land," replied Daisy. "The land all about there will only grow such miserable crops of corn, and so few potatoes, that more people than there are now cannot possibly live on it."

"They must emigrate then."

"But they don't wish. And mother does not believe much in emigration," said the dutiful daughter, as if this opinion of her mother's quite settled the question. "The proper people to help are not those," she went on thoughtfully, and coloring a little as she spoke; "I wish to help the rather rich poor when I come of age."

"All right; do it if you can," said Fergus.

But the next day, he and Daisy, chancing to be alone together out of doors for a few minutes, he was rather surprised when she repeated her speech and his remark upon it.

"When you said, *Do if you can*, perhaps you did not mean that you would be willing to help me."

"Help you," exclaimed Fergus, with genuine astonishment, "why, Daisy, I have hardly a shilling to help myself with, and when I am of age I shall have for my patrimony eight hundred pounds, and no more."

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"Oh ! And yet you mean to travel, you said so."

"Yes, I said so. That is how I mean to spend it. That sounds foolish, but see the world I must and will. After that I can settle down. I must see and climb mountains, and I must and will see some of the best volcanoes."

"Nobody wants to prevent you, and nobody can. I think it would be wise. But then there is the sea-sickness," observed Daisy.

"What do I care? One of my longest voyages would be to see 'The Chinese Widow,' the grandest volcano in the world. Only fancy—about fifteen thousand feet high ! Black, and with a great white vapory hood. I could not die in peace if I had not heard it groan and splutter and blow ; and seen it cover the sea for miles and miles with that floating spongy pumice stuff."

Daisy and Fergus were walking up and down in the little flower-garden close to the house ; when they came to the end of it, they turned and retraced their steps, not at all aware that the two people to whom they were dearest were looking on.

Mrs. E. Smith from her dressing-room window looked with disapproval.

"Those two together again," she thought. "That boy seems to be always talking to Daisy. I have been so careful that at her tender age her simplicity should not be taken away by attentions, but really if her boy cousins are to begin them—I'll get a parasol and go out and join them."

Mrs. Capper, in the meantime, was looking on from the drawing-room.

"This is more than I could have hoped," she thought; "but Daisy brought the girls here of her own free-will, so what could she expect? To be sure she did not know that any one was here but Andrew."

Here they turned. "But you could help me if you would," Daisy was saying, "though it is about money. Oh, Fergus, I have got into such a scrape. Bell does not know. I did not mean to do anything wrong," she faltered, when she saw his look of surprise.

"Is it anything *very* high-minded?" said Fergus, with a laugh.

"*Yes*," answered Daisy, coloring, "and if I cannot borrow some money to do it with—"

Fergus stopped short in the path and gazed at her.

"*You* want money!" he exclaimed. "*You*, Daisy?"

"Yes, I do, really; and where can I get it? I want it to-morrow, and I thought perhaps Andrew would lend it to me till I came of age. But then I shall very likely not see him alone in time, for he said he should not be at home till the late dinner. So I thought I would tell you all about it, and get you to ask him for me."

"Daisy," said Fergus, "tell your mother instead."

"Oh, I can't, because I promised—Miss Lancaster made me promise."

"Promise what?"

"To respect her confidence. She told me many affecting things about her family."

"And you were not to divulge them?"

"No. They are most respectable people; one of her relations is a poet."

"Oh! A male poet or a female poet?"

"How can you make game of me? I hoped you would be sorry."

"So I am; and I need not ask, for I know perfectly well that the poet is a man—or a boy, and that he writes verses to you."

"Extraordinary! How could you find out?"

"Only," continued Fergus, considering, "how can he send them to you without its being found out?"

"Oh," said Daisy, naïvely, "they do not come in a letter; they are printed in the *Blankshire Herald*."

"Ah, and begin 'To the flower of day,' or 'The fair Margaret,' or simply to 'Daisy.'"

Daisy was silent, and looked ashamed.

"He only did it twice," she said, after a pause.

"If I could catch that poet," continued Fergus, "he should not soon forget it! What sort of a fellow is he, Daisy, for of course you know? Is he as old as I am? Is he as big?"

"Then you think I am very silly," said Daisy in a low voice, without answering him.

"I think that at any rate Miss Lancaster has behaved disgracefully. She is the governess, is she not, whom Cousin Daisy dismissed so suddenly

sometime before Andrew went into Scotland—six months before, wasn't it?"

"I don't know what to do," said Daisy, with a crestfallen air. "I made such a very earnest promise to her that I would never tell anything she said about her family. That was before mother was displeased with her, so that I did not think it was wrong to promise."

"But how can you know that she wants money?" inquired Fergus; "the poet cannot put in such lines as—

"O thou heiress, thou,
With 'fivers' me endow,
Or else—"

"Fivers!" interrupted Daisy, vehemently; "if it was only small sums such as those I should not mind. I used to be so fond of Miss Lancaster, and it does make me so unhappy to have to conceal all this."

"Are you allowed to correspond with her?"

"Yes; but that is not how I know anything."

Fergus began now to feel some curiosity on his own account, and when Daisy looked very much out of countenance, he said—

"Well, I cannot tell And, unless *you* tell me."

"She asked me before she went away to look in the correspondence page of a sort of magazine for dressmakers which mother's maid takes, and she said, 'If you ever see letters there signed "Dolores," you will know they are from your heart-broken governess.' She really was very fond of us, particularly of me."

"Indeed!"

"And she said, 'I shall never see you more,' but she cried so much when she went away, and so did we, that mother said she should write to us once a quarter, and we might answer. Mother sees the letters of course."

"Yes, *of course*."

"There is nothing in Miss Lancaster's but talk and twaddle about our birds, and our lessons, and the poor people. But when I found what kind of things she put into her 'Dolores' letters, I felt that she was not a good person, and I wanted to have done with it. But then there is the promise; and besides, she hints at such terrible things which are going to happen to her *unless I respond to her appeal*."

Here Daisy paused.

"Unless you respond," repeated Fergus, "Those are the very words she wrote, I am sure. Well, did you respond?"

Daisy hesitated.

"Andrew may think it was very wrong of me," she faltered.

"Yes; but what did you do?"

"Why, 'Dolores' entreated me to stand between her family and utter ruin, and I had only my allowance. We sometimes send her, as she lives in London, a box of cut flowers,—mother does not object,—and I put in a bracelet that I have. I am not old enough to wear such handsome things yet, and I took it out of the case, and pushed it down under the primroses. Since then I have never had

any peace. There were some diamonds in it. I wish I hadn't done it, Fergus, for mother is so good, so kind."

Two or three tears fell down Daisy's cheek ; she took out her handkerchief and quietly wiped them away.

"The woman is a downright sharper and imposter," exclaimed Fergus.

It was not till this moment that Mrs. E. Smith came up to the two young people ; a morning visitor, whose call had been especially on her, had detained her.

Daisy began to talk of one of the flower-beds, which just then was in fine bloom. Fergus walked beside them perfectly silent, and her pony presently coming round, Daisy ran away to be equipped for a ride.

Fergus came sauntering up to her after she was mounted, and Daisy went on with her communication as if it had never been interrupted.

"But all this will be over nearly at once if I can get money enough. She and this brother, as I understand, but certainly the brother who is the poet, want to sail for New York ; but they want thirty-seven pounds more, or it cannot be done. If they have it by to-morrow they can go. And if not, she says in her 'Dolores' letter, *everything will come out*. What can that mean? Will she tell mother?"

"Oh, no."

"If I could give it then I should be free of her for always."

"Well, I will tell all this to And, and see what he thinks."

"Oh, do; he is so kind and *relational*."

Now Andrew, having heard from Daisy of the behavior of her other cousins, particularly of Tom Hitchcock, was not at all willing to be seen having any kind of private conversation with her; it was therefore Fergus who again met her as she came in from her ride, and whispered:

"I have told him! He wants you to go to your mother's maid, and get any numbers of that *dress-making thing* that she has, and we'll look for those letters."

"Do you think he will lend the thirty-seven pounds?"

"Well!—*I wouldn't if I was asked*; but that's nothing to the purpose."

Fergus and Andrew shortly after took these papers into the smoking-room. The letters of 'Dolores' were very cautiously worded, but the appeals to the poor ex-pupil's charity were urgent.

"I don't think these were written by an educated woman," exclaimed Fergus.

"I have a great mind to go to London myself and meet this 'Dolores,'" said Andrew, without noticing his brother's speech; "she seems to be in great distress. And, as Daisy said, if she and her brother could get away there would be no more trouble from them."

"But how do you know that there is any truth in the whole story?"

"Oh, as to that, I *don't* know."

"I think it would be unfair to help Daisy to cheat her mother. *'If you are in London send, oh! send some one whom you can trust to meet me on that bench on Kensington Gardens.'*" Here a particular bench was carefully indicated, and Fergus declaimed the description in his deep, and yet cracked voice, and added, "You will not do it."

"I don't see what else would do any good."

"What else! I should make Daisy tell her mother if I were you."

"But there is the bracelet. I am sure her mother would find it hard to forgive that, and all this deceit; whereas, if the poor little fool——"

"Little!" interrupted Fergus.

"'Big,' then. If she can be got out of this scrape she will take good care never to put her neck under such a yoke again."

With this sophistry he deceived himself, and the thought of the adventure he meant to have rather amused him.

There was a pause.

"And she has appealed to me."

A second pause.

"And I don't want the thirty-seven pounds, as you know very well."

A third pause.

"And I do rather want to go up to town and see my tailor."

Fergus then condescended to speak.

"Oh, very well," he said. "You are older than I am; I suppose you know best."

While they talked and made various mistakes

about the matter in hand, it was in course of being discussed in a different fashion by some whom it more nearly concerned.

The scene was a very tiny cottage not far from Streatham Common. In a neat and extremely small parlor a fragile girl, very small and thin, was lying on a couch, while an elderly gentlewoman sat knitting diligently near her. The girl had been shedding tears, and had a hard, dry cough.

"You don't know how difficult it all is, mother," she sighed.

"Yes, my dear, I do; was not I a governess myself, Celia?"

"And I was and am so fond of Tracy."

"This is but nature. Twins always are much attached to one another. But let that pass, it had nothing to do with your losing your situation. Celia, have not I always tried to be a good step-mother to you?"

"Yes, dear, and taught me. I could never have got that situation but for you."

"There, don't cry, it makes you cough so. I am quite aware, Celia, that you have something on your mind."

"Yes. Oh, a great deal. But, mother, it *was* Tracy made me lose my situation."

"What?"

"The eldest girl is an heiress. I knew that nobody whatever was to make acquaintance with her through me. Oh! I was happy; Mrs. Smith was so kind."

"Yes ; I know she was."

"But when Tracy knew, I had no more peace. He said he felt so poetical about her ; I don't know what he did not think he could do. He wrote some verses to her, but I would not give them."

"Base fellow," exclaimed the step-mother, indignantly.

"He thought it was hard that I would not help him to make himself interesting."

"His head was always turned through his vanity about himself," said the step-mother, bitterly.

The poor invalid sobbed.

"At last I did let him know—yes, I did tell him where we were going to walk in Kensington Gardens (when they were in their town house), and then he met us two or three times. He was so handsomely dressed, mother, and looked so handsome."

"Oh, I have no patience with it all !"

"But he did look handsome, with his light gloves too, and his eye-glass. And Mrs. Smith found it out, and I was dismissed almost at a day's notice. She said I had betrayed her trust."

"Oh, my poor, foolish dear."

"I feel sometimes as if my heart would break about—about him."

"And about what you did too, I hope, Celia. Surely you feel that it was very wrong?"

"I feel more that it was very hard."

"Yes, Celia ; my precious child, you must not cry, or you will make yourself worse. And what

could you expect—the ways of transgressors almost always are hard, even at the beginning, and what else can they be in the end?”

“But that was not the worst thing I did, dear. I may as well tell it all. I feel as if I could have no peace unless I told.”

“Yes, tell it to me, Celia; but it is the Heavenly Father you must confess it to if you hope to have peace.”

“I know it was wrong, but I could not bear to lose sight of those girls, who had liked me. I had made a plan from the first, that I would keep with them always. To be with rich people who have no cares seems next best to being rich oneself.”

“True.”

“I might write to them every three months, but Mrs. Smith was to see the letters; so I asked the eldest to look in a paper that I told her of, and I should sometimes write to her there, and sign the letter ‘Dolores.’”

“Did you?” said the mother, very seriously.

“I only meant to say pretty things to her, indeed, dear, because, as I told you, I could not bear to lose sight of such good friends.”

“But what about Tracy. When you were dismissed you went to live with him in his lodgings. Did you tell him?”

“Oh, mother, you think of everything. Yes; he was so sorry for having been the cause of my losing my situation, that I told him of this to comfort him, but I little thought what would follow.”

“He made you ask for money?”

"I never wrote at all, dear, never once ; but he did. And what was I to do ? First he let Daisy Smith know that there would be songs written to her in the *Blankshire Herald*. This he signed 'Dolores,' as I had agreed on with her. I felt so shocked and so put to shame. But when he got himself into that terrible scrape that you know of, I saw his letter that he had written, after it was in print. It begged for money. If I had betrayed him he would have been taken up. What could I do ?"

"I don't know ; I hardly know."

"Mother, there came the day after that a box of primroses, addressed of course to me, and in it Daisy had put a bracelet. He was out when it came. I took and pawned it, and he was saved. I would not tell him how I got the money, and I burnt the flowers and the box. But the time had come when I was allowed to write to the girls, so I wrote that I was leaving my present home, and I gave the address of the situation I had just got. I said I should have no other address than that. Tracy was angry when I told him what I had done. But before I went away I begged him so solemnly not to write any more that he declared he would not. He meant, he said, to turn over a new leaf."

"But the pawn-tickets—have you got them ? are they safe ?"

"Oh, yes, mother ; but it will be years before I can save enough out of my earnings to get that bracelet back."

"You are sure he knows nothing about it ?"

"As sure as I can be. But, mother, I know he is not going on well, for he never writes to me. That is a sure sign."

"He is a great disgrace to us all."

"But what else could I have done?"

"How can you know that after all he did not write to your pupil again? He is cunning enough to have devised some plan, and his promise to you would not bind him. But there, you are quite exhausted; let us hope he did not."

"And what else could I have done?" repeated Celia.

"My dear, you knew he had got what was the same thing as money on false pretences, and that you were now making yourself his accomplice."

"But if he had not been able to put the sum back which he had taken he must have been found out, and he might have been transported."

"Too true."

"Mother, I felt as I came back from the pawnshop as if it was almost——"

"Almost what?"

"It chokes me to say it. *Almost a Providence* that I had got the money; and, mother, as I walked I said, without thinking, 'Thank God!' Then in an instant something seemed to rise up within me and cry out 'HOW DARE YOU?' It was almost as if I heard the words. I did not think before that our conscience could be a terrible thing. I often lie awake in the night, particularly since I have been so ill, and you fetched me here to you. You are not to think I am not sorry for all the wrong

things I have done, and when I get well I do hope I shall never act a double part again."

"I hope so too, my precious child. And now, as poor Tracy will have a fresh start in America—"

"And oh, how good you have been to help him there out of your slender means."

"The temptation to screen him and help him will be removed."

"But, mother, God is very forgiving."

"Yes, indeed, my dear."

"I can never feel as if it was wicked even to lie or cheat to help Tracy. Anything else seems impossible; but I hope He will forgive me that I thanked him because I had been able to do so."

She turned her face on the pillow and began to slumber from weakness. As the soft light fell on her wasted features the step-mother put down her knitting and looked at her.

"*When you get better*, my poor dear," she mentally repeated. "Ah! but is that ever likely to be?"

IV.

THE BLACK EYE.

"ANY news?" asked Mr. Evan Fraser of Mr. Callender, as the latter walked up to his cottage the next day.

"Any news, Mr. Fraser?" was the reply. "Ay, there's this news, if you can make anything of it. The young master went to London early yesterday, got up at six o'clock, and was to breakfast there; went to see his tailor as was give out to Mr. Saunders and the family; and came home at six o'clock in the afternoon with a black eye."

"Football, d'ye think?" said Mr. Fraser.

"Well, he didn't say so; and if it was, why didn't he? He went to his smoking-room, and Mr. Ferguson ran right away into the kitchen, where the cook was that minute putting down as fine a piece of beef as you'd wish to see. He made her take it back again, and he cut off a slice. 'What in nature is this for, sir,' says she. 'Oh,' says he, 'it's only that my brother wants it for his eye,' and set off he did with it on a skewer. I suppose it was clapped on, but when he sat at dinner at the head of his own table, if he didn't look the very *moral* of a schoolboy that has had a fight. Mr. Saunders is

mistaken. But, Mr. Fraser, I'm right down pleased to see you looking so bravely ; and I was to say from the young master, that, in the matter of any seeds or cuttings, or what not that you think Mrs. Smith might be the better for you are on all accounts to have them. • You'll tell me what day you go north. I wish you good-luck, and I'll have them ready for you."

Suitable acknowledgments were made and grateful messages were sent by Mr. Callender, who had, however, no chance of delivering them that day.

The young Squire was not at all in his own good graces, he was rather sulky even with his favorite brother, who had some difficulty in getting from him the meagre account of his adventure, which he at last vouchsafed.

"I say, do tell a fellow how it was."

"Why, she said in the letter, eleven o'clock. I was in the Gardens before that time. I'll never meddle with other people's philanthropy again. Made myself ridiculous for nothing, too."

"So she wasn't there?"

"You *know* she wasn't. Nobody was there. A whipper-snapper of a fellow came shortly to that bench, and sat by me."

"Young, was he?"

"Five and twenty, perhaps. He sat by me and, he looked sneaky."

"You remember him well?"

"Perfectly. Several people passed near ; he did not look up. He had his hands in his trousers' pockets. At last we seemed to be quite alone. But

I thought I felt somebody touch me. I started up ; behind the bench was a great lout of a fellow, and in one instant I got a blow on the eye."

"From him?"

"No, from the whipper-snapper. They ran off among the trees. I made after one of them, and shouted for the police, but I lost sight of him almost immediately."

"It's a hateful sell," exclaimed Fergus. "I wish I'd been with you."

"So do I ; what chance was there, two against one !"

"And you found the check was gone?"

"No, that was the worst of it. It was my purse with money in it that was gone. I had put the check into my card-case."

"Well, what did you do next?"

"I went back to the bench, but 'Dolores' was not come."

"She could not possibly have had anything to do with the robbery" said Fergus, as if in deep cogitation.

"Nonsense. A sentimental, silly governess ! Why you must be cracked to think of such a thing. Pockets are picked in London by the dozen every day and every hour."

"Yes, of course."

"That one of them was my pocket is a mere accident."

"Yes. Well, did you go to a police court about it?"

"No," said Andrew, irritably. "I may be an

ass, but I am not such an ass as that. Why if those fellows were arrested I should have to give evidence against them if it came to a trial; and shouldn't I be *roasted* when they got me in the witness-box, and it came out that I had set off at six o'clock in the morning '*to respond to the appeal*' of a discarded governess in distress, Daisy's governess too? Go to a police court indeed! I would rather fly the country! That odious little toad, Tommy Hitchcock, must never hear of this."

"Then you must never let Daisy hear a word of it."

"Poor Daisy; no, she is too childish to be trusted. Look at her looming about by herself in the garden. What did you tell her?"

"What you told me to say."

"But I forget what it was; I felt so savage just then."

"Oh, I went up and walked with her in the shrubbery, and told her you had been to London, and that 'Dolores' did not meet you on the bench. You went to the address of where she used to live with her brother, and the woman of the house vowed she knew nothing about her, nor of her brother either, and that was all."

"Well, you might go to her now; and, as they go away so soon, I should just like to send her word that she had better confess to her mother about the bracelet, but not to tell that I tried to help her, and ignominiously failed."

Andrew, his eye being still black, swollen and inflamed, sat in the shade behind the green Vene-

tian blinds of his smoking-room. He peeped through, and saw, not without amusement, that Fergus had some difficulty in executing his mission, for Mrs. Smith was walking with Daisy.

"Clumsy, both mother and daughter," quoth the young host, as he calmly puffed out a little smoke. His eyes, perhaps without any conscious complacency, rested on his own shapely foot and leg ; the neat ankle so well displayed in the costume he was wearing—black stockings and velvet knickerbockers.

"In three months," he reflected, "Daisy will be as tall as I am. She only wants one inch of five foot eight now."

Others of the family then joined Mrs. Smith and Daisy, so Fergus at last contrived to give his message, after which he promptly retired.

The two girls, not being present at the late dinner, always came down before it into the drawing-room.

This evening Daisy was very dull, the message from Andrew had impressed her ; but the next evening she had evidently been crying, which did not add to her good looks ; her face was swelled and her eyes were red.

"Fergus again," thought Mrs. Capper, as her second son came slouching up. "Well, it really must be the case that he has some understanding with her ; what can it mean ?"

Daisy had turned to a window, and seemed to be looking out.

"Well?" was absolutely all that Fergus said; and all her answer was—

• "Yes; I've done it."

"You have?" he answered. "Well, I call that being a brick."

To say that Mrs. Smith was astonished and hurt, and very uneasy at what Daisy told her, would not half express the matter. She was a very straightforward, simple-minded person, not easily made suspicious, but, on the other hand, not easily able to forgive and forget. The whole of that evening and the next day a certain constraint in her manner could not be concealed. She sent to her maid for the little dressmaking periodical, but the maid could only find one number, which was the first, and nothing particular was in it, but the request from 'Dolores' that a certain young lady would look for a song in the *Blankshire Herald*. Bell in the meantime got an inkling of some unknown alarm for Daisy, and shed profuse tears.

The last day dragged on very tardily. There was a tennis party. Daisy was very awkward and shy, and to both the watchful mothers it not only appeared that both Fergus and Andrew were occasionally encouraging, but sometimes remonstrating with Daisy, as if they were bidding her pluck up courage, or taking opportunities during the game to drawing attention to other guests who wanted to talk to her.

The evening came at last. Daisy and her mother were now at ease together, but both were dull, and Bell was inclined to be tearful.

Mrs. Capper admitted to herself that they were not lively people, in fact, the party was rather more cheerful without them. Mrs. Smith had two maids with her, but it appeared to be thought that the impending journey made her pre-occupied, and that she was absent now and then to give instructions about packing.

Who ever heard of going to London at the end of August? Mrs. Smith meant to spend a few days there in her town house, in that deserted metropolis, and then go on to Malvern, to keep out of the way of the scarlatina.

How fortunate it was for Daisy that she had confessed. The London letters came in at breakfast-time, and one from Mrs. Lancaster, Celia's step-mother. Daisy's mother no sooner ascertained this, than she folded it up, and put it aside to be read on the journey.

The young Squire's eye was still black when he and Fergus went to the station to see the guests off. He was slightly cross, and just a little crest-fallen. This mission to London, which he had told himself was to be so philanthropical, had turned out, as he thought, such an ignominious failure; but it was owing to him and his brother that Daisy had confessed her fault, and this bore consequences for her far beyond what either of them had in his mind when he insisted on it. Daisy was properly and intelligently looked after from that day forward, and shielded both from such aspirants as Tommy Hitchcock and Miss Lancaster's brother.

"I wish Miss Bell to travel with you," said Mrs. Smith to her maid. "She always needs so much air, and I cannot have the window open."

A carriage had been engaged, so Daisy and her mother were alone; and the train had no sooner started than the latter took out letters and began to read. That from Miss Lancaster's step-mother set forth that this poor young person was now pronounced to have heart complaint, and was in very precarious health; that her twin brother had sailed for America. He was no comfort or credit to his family. Mrs. Lancaster begged to ask whether there was any likelihood that Celia's late employer might be in London that autumn. Celia was so desirous to see her. She could so much more easily tell her what she had to say than write it.

This letter had been first directed to Scotland, and sent down with various others. The mother glanced at Daisy, and did not doubt that Miss Lancaster's communication concerned the bracelet, but she meant, if possible, to say no more to Daisy about that. She put the letter away. Then, seeing that Daisy looked dull, she said:

"You seem sorry to leave these cousins."

"Yes, mother," said Daisy, "they are so nice and intimate with us, so relationy."

"Cousin Mary was so very kind too," said the mother, not particularly well pleased to hear the young men praised.

"Oh, yes," said the heiress, "but Cousin Mary is just like other people, just. The boys are not."

"Not like other people," answered Mrs. Smith,

doubtfully. "What do you mean, my love?"

What a difference it made to Daisy, Bell being away. She answered simply,

"Why, other people, particularly other young men—and boys—flatter us, of course."

Mrs. Smith looked disturbed. This was only the second time that Daisy had shown any consciousness of such a thing. She hastened to explain.

"And the Cappers say it is enough to turn our heads. I mean that we are flattered because we shall have such large fortunes. I don't mean that our heads are likely to be turned with vanity about our faces, because, whatever they all say, we can look in the glass and see that we are not lovely."

There she paused.

"Well?" said the mother.

"But Andrew and Fergus never do. They never pretend to think we are different from the girls who have no fortunes at all, and they laughed at Bell a good deal. It improved her."

"Oh, that's what you mean by being *relationy*," observed Mrs. Smith; and yet, though she would have been extremely unwilling to accept either of these fine young men as a son-in-law, she was in a slight degree *nettled* to learn that they had laughed at her children.

"Yes, and Fergus said we might depend on it that if Bell had had brothers they would have made her behave differently; and whatever other young men might say, it was certain that they all

detested girls who were always crying or fainting, as Bell does sometimes ; and would never think of marrying them on any account, unless they were heiresses."

"But you never cry and do not faint," observed the mother. "What did Andrew and what did Fergus say to you?"

Daisy looked very much out of countenance.

"Mother, Bell and I have always been such dear friends, and we consult so about everything."

"Yes?"

"Now she is for once not here, she may think it odd that I told you they had laughed."

"I shall take no notice of it, unless she tells me herself. What did they say?"

"Oh, they said—they said how very kind you were, and how sweet, always wishing us to have pleasure ; and I am sure, dear mother, I never meant to be undutiful?"

"What, they said you were undutiful?"

"No ; but Andrew said he thought I had been very childish not to tell you things, and that I ought not to be always wishing to do what Bell would like. He said that being the eldest I ought to lead. It was Fergus who said that if I went on not telling it would be undutiful."

"Oh," said the mother, breathing more freely ; "they knew about the bracelet then?"

"Yes."

"And you found it easier to tell them than to tell your own mother?"

Daisy foresaw this speech ; she acknowledged its

justice, and for the moment could not speak. But Bell was away, the tyranny of the weak over the strong was for the moment withdrawn ; a sort of instinct appeared to assure her that her mother would "respect her confidence," so far as Bell was concerned. She plucked up courage in a moment or two.

"I have confessed the thing which was really wrong," she said. "This is not about the bracelet—it's about Tommy Hitchcock."

"Tommy Hitchcock !" exclaimed her mother, with an air of such amazement that the ridiculous side of what she had to say overcame everything else, and Daisy burst into a violent fit of laughter.

Mrs. Smith had not been an heiress herself ; she had merely been a sweet, kindly young creature, married by an elderly man who had been good to her and made her happy. She did not even now know much of the world, and was destined then and there to be taught a lesson by her own child as to how sordid and how rapacious it could be.

"Why did you not tell me this before ?" she asked, when the attentions of Tom Hitchcock, and of various young men, cousins and not cousins, had been detailed to her.

"Oh, because Bell thought it would not be high-minded."

"What does she mean by that ?"

"I know, mother, but I can hardly say it in another word."

"Try."

"Things ought to be fair. If we have most we

must give most ; but besides that, to make things impartial, we should let people take advantage if they can. We must admit that it is natural they should."

"Bell really thinks so? Well, but Tom Hitchcock was not all you talked about with Andrew and Fergus."

"No. Yesterday we talked about our names," said Daisy. "We did more than once. They said we were more fortunate than they were, for we were sure to change our names, and not be called *Smith* any more, but they could never be anything but *Capper* till the end of their days. They think *Capper* an ugly name."

"So it is," said Mrs. Smith, with satisfaction in the tone.

"Worse than Smith, Fergus said, for that is so common that no one thinks at all about it."

Mrs. Smith here *forgave the Cappers for what they had never done*, but she added—

"I suppose they never paid you any attention at all themselves?"

"Oh dear no, mother," said Daisy, "never."

"Dear boys," thought Mrs. Smith, "they are very nice fellows."

Here the train steamed into the station. Their journey was over, but if Bell had not been for once apart from Daisy it is impossible to say how much longer Tommy Hitchcock might have gone on sighing, as he expressed it, and spending his money in buying sham jewellery for his young cousin.

Some one was waiting to see Mrs. Smith when she reached her house. Hearing the name *Mrs. Lancaster*, she went directly to her library, and there found a very pleasant-looking person, who seemed much disturbed, and began by saying she feared she had something to speak of which would give pain.

"I hope not," said Daisy's mother. "If it concerns a bracelet, my dear child has confessed her fault to me."

Mrs. Lancaster was deeply relieved to hear this, and with a trembling hand produced a bracelet, which she begged to return from her step-daughter.

"Am I so happy then," she faltered, "as to have nothing to say excepting to express my poor Celia's sorrow for her own share of the blame?"

Daisy's mother did not wish her to have anything more to do with the Lancasters; but she explained that she would come herself in a day or two and see Celia.

"I understood that her family was in urgent need of money; has she then kept this by her so long?"

"Oh, no; she pawned it."

"And you?"

"I had written to your housekeeper in Scotland, and learning that you were expected here to day (I had redeemed the bracelet), I determined to bring it at once."

"You must have made a great sacrifice to get it out of pawn?"

Mrs. Lancaster drew herself up.

"Yes I sold a *share* I had ; but that I count nothing compared with—"

"No, stop," said Daisy's mother. "My child too is greatly to blame. She gave this to Miss Lancaster of her own free-will. She must not have it again. I am her guardian. You may give it to Celia from me. She is to sell it, and make things straight again."

"Thank you," was all Mrs. Lancaster said ; and when she got home, and told her daughter, Celia said——

"Mother, I believe it is more my conscience than anything else that has made me ill. Now I know that this has been confessed, I believe I can get well again."

Now it may be noticed that Celia did not know all, or indeed half, of what her unworthy brother had done. She little thought that he himself with his accomplice had robbed young Andrew Capper, and with that very money had got away to America. How much less could she suppose that, once away from his evil associates, he would fall in with some worthy people and lead a better life, It was so, however.

As for Daisy, she did not know how much less Celia was to blame than she supposed. Celia had done wrong, and she ever after had to bear the blame of a wrong which she had not done, but had only made possible. Daisy in this case never had a chance of being what she called high-minded. Celia told her step-mother what she supposed her-

self to know of the matter ; Daisy told her mother what she thought she knew. The remarkable result of what had really taken place was in the end the reformation of a terrible scamp, who lived to rue his civil deeds and never be able to make reparation.

But to return to Andrew and Fergus. While her two sons were away, taking leave of the Smiths at the station, Mrs. Capper sat in Andrew's smoking-room, absolutely quiet, and so deep in thought that she hardly noticed the flight of time. She had been a good and kind wife, but her husband had been so long a hopeless and often a helpless invalid, that her thoughts had centered on her sons, their prospects and their interests.

"Fergus and Daisy were constantly together," she reflected. "I cannot be mistaken in thinking that her mother did not like it. But that hardly annoys me ; because it shows that there was something—not a mere fancy of mine—to disapprove of. If they really like one another, is there a chance? Fergus is terribly impracticable. The oddest part of it is, that Andrew seemed to know something, and to be helping him."

She paused to consider.

"In such a matter as that," she reflected, "I should have said that Andrew had but little sense—I never saw him show any. But as for Fergus ! There really was nothing more fixed in my mind than the certainty that Fergus had none—positively none."

With these appreciative words Mrs. Capper

looked up; there were footsteps on the gravel.

"Here they come," she thought, and she lifted her work from her knee and drew out the needle.

"What, mother, you here!" exclaimed Andrew; and the two young men entered, stepping over the low window-sill.

"Yes, my dear; I wanted to see how your eye was; there was no time while the dear girls and their mother were here."

She looked affectionately at her favorite son, and added,

"But it is very pleasant to play the host, is it not, dear boy?"

"Yes, mother," said Andrew without enthusiasm.

"And so you saw them off, and Daisy's love-birds and Daisy's little dogs?"

"We saw them off—Bell in tears, as usual, about something or other. But, mamma, Fergus wants to speak to you."

Such a beautiful damask flush mounted in the mother's cheek as would have done credit to a girl's. They generally said "mamma" when they wished to be persuasive or confidential.

Fergus, seated on the low window-ledge, with his feet inside, looked not a little out of countenance. He lifted first one foot and then the other, much as he might have done if the soles of his shoes had been on his mind, and he was considering whether they were thick enough.

"What can it be about?" answered the mother, good-naturedly; but she thought she knew, and, perhaps by the way of helping him, she said,

"Fergus, you remind me of your dear father. It was just in such an attitude that he sat when he was trying to pluck up courage to ask your mother to be his wife. You are ten times more like him than any of the others."

"Father was eight-and-thirty, wasn't he, mamma, when you married him?" said Andrew.

"Yes."

"That's about the age I should like to be if I marry at all," said Fergus, looking up; "but, mother, I did really want to say something—something important."

"I should have thought," said Mrs. Capper, coloring with disappointment and vexation, "that a young man's marriage was about the most important thing there was to talk of."

"Oh, yes, when he wants to marry, no doubt," said Fergus, as if apologizing to his mother. "Mamma?"

"Yes."

"I have had a good deal of time to think since I came to this jolly place; and And having proposed to find the money for me to go up to Cambridge, you seemed to think that of course I shall go."

"Yes, OF COURSE."

"But, mother, I do so long to see the world, that I don't think I can trust myself to stop in that hole of a place, even if I do go."

Here he paused; and as Mrs. Capper's face looked anything but propitious, Andrew came to the rescue.

"Well, the fact is, mamma, we have neither of us been much out of London hitherto, and he thought, at least we both thought, it would be better to see something before we settle down. The same sum that would send Fergus to College would enable him to go almost everywhere."

"And after that?" asked Mrs. Capper, decisively.

"Why, he will have, at any rate, his own eight hundred pounds, which is as much as he would have had if we had remained poor."

Then Andrew sat down ; and presently answered the consternation in his mother's face by saying—"Well, dear mother, you always hoped that you might be able to get some appointment for Fergus abroad, and then you would not have seen him again for ten or twenty years, perhaps. Now Fergus only wants to travel for three years, and I want to go with him only for one, and then leave him to proceed on *his own hook*, and come home. Why, I've never seen Rome. I want to see Cairo."

Two or three tears started under Mrs. Capper's eyelashes, and fell on her comely cheeks.

"Oh, don't, mother," cried both the young men.

Mrs. Capper dried them away, and said rather coldly :

"Though Fergus may want, quite unnecessarily, to remain unmarried for nearly eighteen years, you at least can marry whenever you like, Andrew."

"Quite unnecessarily !" exclaimed Andrew.

"Why, mother what has he to marry on, even if he wished it?"

"It is just as easy to marry a girl with money as one without," answered the mother, "at least, it is for a young man in his position. It is most ridiculous of him, when there are two heiresses in the family, both of whom are most intimate with him, and fond of him, to talk in that way."

"Well, mamma," said Andrew, blandly, "perhaps Fergus would not mind promising you that if Daisy is still unmarried when he is eight-and-thirty, he will think of what you have said."

"I should mind," exclaimed Fergus, bluntly. "I see no reason to be ungentlemanly about any girl just because she is clumsy and not good-looking."

"All right," said Andrew, "quite my own feelings, now I think of them! I apologize, old fellow."

"And I," thought the mother, "give it up. Oh, foolish, foolish boy!"

"But, mother," continued Andrew, "I know it is hard on you to part with him for three years and me for one—and—I've been thinking about the Dower house."

"What about it?" said Mrs. Capper in a dispirited tone. This matrimonial disappointment had overpowered her regrets at parting with her boys.

"If I go away for a year, would it not be best for you to live here instead, and keep the people in order, and see that all goes on properly? Would you?"

Here indeed was balm. Mrs. Capper put her work down on her knee and lost herself in thought. What ! live and reign and rule in that house for a year, with no one to interfere.

She would not be in too great a hurry to accede.

"Yes," she said gravely, after what seemed to her sons a long time. "Yes, Andrew, I would."

Thereupon both of them came up and kissed her with all gratitude and duty.

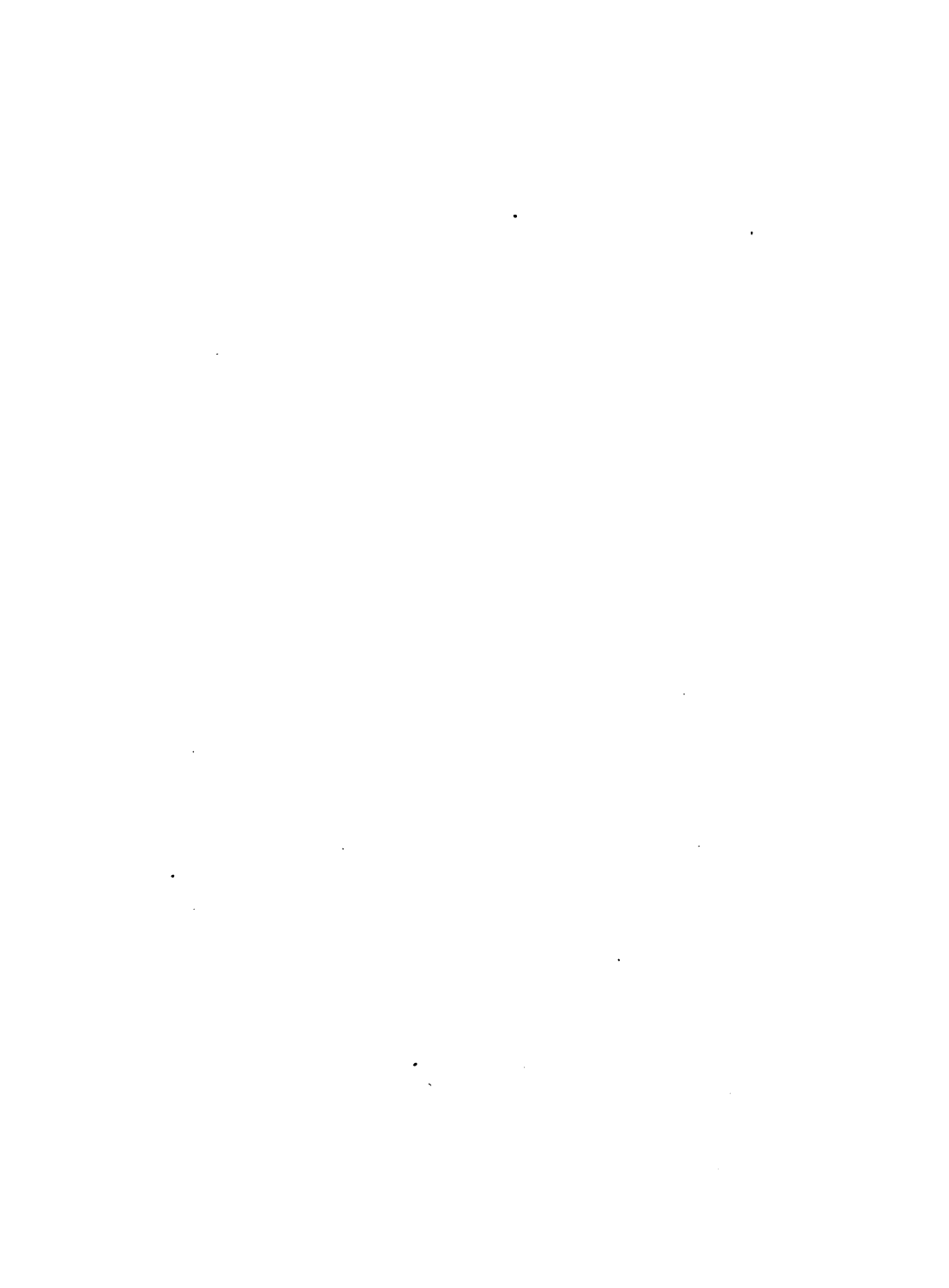
"But it is painful to me to find you so terribly unpractical, especially you, Fergus. Then you are quite sure you do not want to try—to—make yourself agreeable to Daisy?"

"Oh, mamma, yes ; I am quite sure."

That was the end of the conversation, and whatever other people may think, I do not see why it should not have ended in that way,—not at all.

END OF PART I.

PART II.



I.

THE SILVER GATES.

SOMEWHERE in Aboukir Bay, at the bottom of the sea, lie the silver gates. They were carried off during the great French war from a Roman Catholic church at Valetta, and were on board the splendid French ship, *L'Orient*, when she blew up during Nelson's sea-fight, the battle of the Nile

Now if you thought that there were sometimes clear and perfectly calm days when, sailing over that spot, you might see the dismasted hull incrustated with scoria, concealing not the shape, but only the material of her wooden bulk, you would perhaps like to do so. That was just such a thing as Fergus Capper had wished to do. And one happy day he did it.

But Andrew was not with him.

Unfortunate for Andrew ; and he had thought he was so perfectly free to do as he liked. He found that no young fellow who has to go daily to a lawyer's office, or a bank, or any other kind of clerkship, was more tied, both as to time and place, than he was.

When last we heard of Andrew and Fergus they had just taken leave of their cousins, Daisy and Bell, and had managed to tell their mother that they wanted to travel, that they longed to see the world. She had consented to this partly, it must be owned, because Andrew had proposed that she should have his house to live in, and should rule in his stead and dispense his bounty and hospitality in his absence.

Rule was sweet to her, and rest no less. For the last few years of her life she had not had much of these, and had gone through a world of anxiety, straitened circumstances, and a certain loneliness in her lot; for her husband had long been too ill to interest himself, or to take counsel with her much as to how she should manage their small means and their many sons.

She was still young, very little over forty, had good health, and an attractive appearance. She felt that it would be pleasant to go about at ease, living in a delightful house, having money to spend, and servants to wait on her.

Andrew and Fergus made very remarkable plans. There was a distinct promise that the elder should only stay away one year, and the younger three.

But even the Arctic regions they hoped to get a dip into, and then there was Nineveh, and every fellow, they agreed, would like to see America. The very Victoria Nyanza itself did not exhaust the programme, for Fergus was quite determined to see India, and perhaps Cashmere too.

In their long and frequent discussions together,

it seemed at first impossible to give up any of these remote places. America went first ; Andrew thought that could be done at any time ; then Nineveh got pushed into the background, it would take too long ; and as the best part of the fun would be to see things together, they would see the very best things first.

"Nineveh was so jolly old," as Fergus said, "that it would wait, and not be likely to change ; but then the Victoria Nyanza was so jolly new, that if a fellow did not see that within a very few years, it would be so much changed that it would be enough to break a fellow's heart. There'll be steam-ploughs in the swamps about it, and stores where they'll sell bread made with their German yeast—ten years hence. Not a hippopotamus will be able to lift up his head in peace and snort, without seeing a windmill near the margin, which he'll take for some ravenous unknown bird, and choke himself with mud in his efforts to get away from its ravages. Only fancy his horror when he hears it creak, and sees it begin to go round."

They did not want to start for a couple of months. They went to London together and bought their outfit ; when they came back and this was unpacked, it was remarked that nothing came out which was at all fit for the Arctic regions. These had been, as an American would say, "crowded out" by the more habitable parts of the globe.

The next brother, Tom, who was in a chronic state of sulks because he was not to go too, frequently set the elder ones right as to the exact latitude and

longitude of various places they were sure they meant to visit. It seemed as if he got that and a good deal of other learning up concerning them, on purpose to show what a shame it was that he was to be left behind. But so it was, and at last they started, taking care to let him know how lucky he was to be at home instead of at school for the half of that "half," on account of some trifling thing the matter with his eyes.

They thought it might be well on the whole to stay a couple of weeks first at Rome, that being near Brindisi. For Egypt they at last decided to visit first, and then they would go by the Suez Canal to India.

So at Rome they were, and had but just found time enough to acknowledge that they were a little disappointed in the slightly dusty old pictures, and a certain gauntness in the air of the statues, and the old buildings—when there came a letter to them of such startling importance that they ceased telling each other that things at Rome reminded them, more than they liked, of the British Museum—"which was an old shop they were totally tired of," and for a long while, that is half the night, could not decide what they would do.

This was the letter—

"HONORED SIR,

"I never was so drove into a corner along of being slow with my pen, and not used to written long letters before, and what's worse, there being but two hours or rather better to do it in.

"Sir, you two gentlemen will be sorry, I should judge, mortal sorry, to hear as there has been an accident; not by any means that the mistress is in danger of her life. Thanks be to the Almighty ; but Mr. Tom, he drove her out in your dog-cart, and the mare was fresh.

"The groom he did say both to Mr. Saunders and me, as we was looking on when the start was made, that the mare was fresh, too fresh she was, and that's the truth, and Mr. Tom not used to driving. We thought he didn't ought to give her her head.

"But, sir, the time goes on and I shan't tell you at all unless I look sharp ; that in an hour or so the mistress was brought home in a hay-wagon very easy and comfortable, and doctor riding beside her, and her right leg broke both above the ankle and above the knee, and her face bruise. And Mr. Tom was brought home too ; he got home soon after the mare, that actually jumped over that low gate as you know of into the yard, with the trap behind her.

"And, what I regret to say, he were too cheerful by half—'We must all have our experiences,' says he, just as a young fellow might say that had taken a drop too much, and he seemed to show as one that was inclined to sing. We carried him upstairs, and doctor does not pernounce much, but the spine, said he, was not as he could wish, your Ma, sir, not soever, is to be afraid of. She will walk again. So no more, sir, from your obedient humble servant,

"DANIEL CALLENDER.

"P.S.—Mr. Saunders, sir, was so upset in his

feelings, he really could not write. Said he, 'Whatever shall we do? We can't send a telegram on account of their lingo.' And we agreed I should write to you, and he should write, sir, to such relations as we know the address of, so you'll hear shortly. The mare has broke her knees, and the dog-cart has gone to smash. Doctor have not been out of the house an hour; that is the cause why you have such a plain account of this here dispensation, for if we had a waited till some o' your relations could have wrote, you might have been gone on none of us knows where."

"What shall it be, one, or both?" asked Fergus about midnight, when they had conned the letter over and over again. It was a faithful piece of service to have done, and had cost the gardener a good deal; there were many blots and some erasures.

Till Fergus asked the question it had hardly occurred to Andrew that they could part, but it evidently had to his brother, and almost at once the whole thing became clear to him. He must return, but why need he drag Fergus back?

"I wish you to go on at any rate," he said, decidedly. "If I find things no worse than Callender says, I might be able to join you in a month at Port Said and we could go on to India together."

Fergus was deeply relieved; an almost unfailling instinct, so far as Andrew was concerned, made him well aware that though he could take such journeying as they proposed without Andrew, Andrew could not get on half so well without him. Unless

he was there for a companion and aid, it would not perhaps be done at all—besides, Andrew was paymaster. Fergus had more affection for Andrew than for anything else that breathed, but to give up Central Africa, or even North Africa, for him seemed a frightful sacrifice.

He drew a deep breath of supreme relief, and felt almost inclined to hug his brother ; but no, that would have meant too much, and after all Andrew was the eldest. If property has rights, it certainly has duties, as well as primogeniture.

“Very well, dear boy,” he said at last, with a scarcely perceptible increase of color in his dark cheek, “if you wish me to go on, of course I shall, and wait for you wherever we both agree.”

Scarcely after seven o'clock the very next morning, Fergus and Andrew, having divided their luggage, got a hasty meal, and parted at the station, Andrew telegraphing from thence to Cousin Daisy, for he knew she would be aware of the accident by that time. He requested that an answer might meet him at the GARE at Paris, for she could answer without being daunted by the “lingo.”

Fergus felt terribly dull, and knew it was his duty so to do. He declared that the tour was utterly spoilt, though he was to go on.

Andrew was not displeased to hear him say so, but for his part was not half so concerned for his mother and brother, for the simple reason that he was giving up all to go to them, and he could do no more.

He got his telegram at Paris from Cousin Daisy. It ran thus—

"No danger in your mother's case. She is doing well. Tom no worse than yesterday. Come straight here first.

It was dated from Mrs. E. Smith's town-house, where he knew she then was.

He occupied himself before he crossed in fumbling with his *Bradshaw*, and found that as he would go to London by one of the very best trains, he should lose little time if he stayed there awhile, for in any case, what with changes and country junctions, he should not get home till nearly midnight if he stopped at Dover. So he did as he was asked.

"Well, it's nice after all to have relations," he thought, when, the hall-door of his cousin's house being opened, he saw Daisy and Bell cheerfully nodding to him in the hall as if to assure him that the news was no worse.

"Mother will be in directly," said Bell, "and we are going to dine at seven. It is now six—and you can go to bed, she says, directly after."

"Cousin Mary," added Daisy, "is going on very well."

"But what's the matter with Tom?"

"Saunders wrote and said he was a good deal cut about the face—and he's very feverish, that's why mother is out; she drove to an address they sent, to engage a nurse. We were to tell you so, and to say that if you start from this door to-morrow at seven you will be at home quite as early as they can see you."

Andrew was utterly tired, besides which there

had been a rough passage. He was covered with dust, and more dishevelled than he had ever been in his life before.

"Well then, I'll go and dress," he said wearily. "Very many thanks."

He hardly looked the same young man when he came down into the drawing-room, from the room that had been prepared for him, and found the two girls alone.

In a few weeks, they told him, the doctor had said that Cousin Mary would most likely walk very well again.

It was Mrs. Hitchcock who had sent a letter that morning. Mrs. Hitchcock was Andrew's aunt, but only their cousin.

"She went down soon after Saunders wrote to her about the accident. She told mother that she was sure her sister would want her."

"Ah," says Andrew, "that was kind. But I wish I knew why poor Tom was so excited when they brought him home."

"Oh, yes, mother was disturbed at that too ; but when Saunders wrote again he remarked, as if it had not signified at all, that your tenant, that nice farmer you know with the tall wife"

"Yes—well ?"

"Well, he and she ran out to Tom, and sat on the road by him some time, and they gave him some very stiff brandy-and-water to bring him to,—a good deal of it. And Saunders thought that might have been the reason."

No doubt of it ; but as Andrew ceased to be

uneasy about his brother, he thought he perceived very plainly that he need not have come home and spoilt his tour at all. His mother had her sister with her, and Tom was cut about the face, and had been what Saunders called "a little fresh."

"And so Aunt Hitchcock went down," he remarked.

"Yes," answered Daisy; "but she said it was very inconvenient, so she must . . ."

There was a peculiar twinkle in Daisy's eye when she said this, and paused.

"Must what?" asked Andrew.

"Must take Antoinette down with her."

Here both the girls burst into a titter.

"Oh," said Andrew, looking a little out of countenance; not that he would have liked to acknowledge any peculiar significance in his aunt's conduct, if they had not plainly hinted at it.

"What could put such a thing into your silly heads?" he exclaimed, the color deepening in his handsome face.

"What thing?" said Daisy, innocently. "I don't think it is at all fair that you should be constantly laughing at us, and not observe—or pretend not to observe—that you are in exactly the same case."

"It is not at all the same case," said Andrew, with mock gravity. "And I do assure you that I have not had one offer yet! But I say—you girls, I do think it is a great pity you are always thinking about being married."

"I've had nine offers, counting the three from

Tom Hitchcock. How can I help thinking about it?" inquired Daisy.

"Besides, it does not signify," Bell put in—"because we told you we had made a resolution not to marry at all."

"Unless to some one who really and truly loved us—and that, as Fergus said, we could not possibly discover," said Daisy.

"Antoinette is pretty," continued Bell. "She is just like that portrait of Cousin Mary, which was taken when she was first married."

"Oh, well then," said Andrew rising, and openly looking at himself in a pier-glass; "then she must be like me; everybody says I am the image of my mother. Like me,—that at least is a security."

"How so, And?"

"I am only talking of things in general—things in the abstract; it's contrast that people want as a rule in their husbands and wives, not likenesses. I am the same as other people, I shall want contrast; and now I think of it, Daisy, what a contrast Tom Hitchcock is to you!"

Daisy colored and looked somewhat out of countenance.

"You called him a mercenary little toad," said Bell, "and that's just what he is."

"Oh, well, yes, of course, he is little. He is about two inches shorter than I am—when I am with you, Bell, I feel that I am little too. Why do you go on growing so tall?—you should consider 'that the half is greater than the whole.'"

"What does that mean?"

"In this case it means that the half of this extra height of yours would be better than all of it."

"A couple of inches makes all the difference between you and Tom Hitchcock," said Daisy in a conciliatory spirit; "you are just about the middle height."

"And he has a handsome face, everybody would allow that," Andrew added pensively.

"Oh, how can you be so horrid as to torment me about him!" said Daisy.

"Now, Bell!" exclaimed Andrew. "What! beginning to cry. Oh, you more than goose! '*It's not kind to Daisy*,' nonsense. Well, Daisy, I'll make a compact with you; the name of Hitchcock—A. Hitchcock, or T. Hitchcock—shall not be mentioned by either of us to the other in the way of chaff any more."

"Agreed," said Daisy.

"No," said Bell, "that's not fair. I like to hear Andrew—and all the Cappers make game of Tom. I have done, since Fergus asked me whether he didn't ever squeeze my hand."

"He does, then?"

"Yes, when he thinks Daisy's not looking."

"And very prudent too. In case he fails to get ten thousand a year, do you mean to say that two is not worth having? But you girls have no sympathy with a young man's natural aspirations. Daisy, is it decided when you are to be presented?"

"Oh yes, mother is so kind; she consents, and it's not to be till I am eighteen."

"Oh! by your mother—'Miss Smith, by Mrs.

Smith.' It would sound better if it could be *Miss Smith of that ilk.*"

"But there is no ilk."

"If you were a boy, it could perhaps be 'The Smith of Glen what's-his-name.' It's a pity you have a place with a name that no Englishman could pronounce properly unless he had a hinge in his nose so that he could turn it round and finish it at the back of his head."

"It was dear papa's place," exclaimed Bell.

"Boo-oo-oo !"

"Oh, Bell, dear," said Daisy ; "how can you be so tiresome !"

"And it wasn't his place either," said Andrew. "I've often heard Cousin Daisy say he had only a long lease of it."

Here the said Cousin Daisy came in, and dinner was shortly announced.

Andrew was greatly tired, and being now more easy as to the effects of the accident, he shortly after went to bed and slept heavily, so long as the household would let him.

Then having been duly knocked up, helped with his packing, waited on at breakfast, and seen to the station before the ladies of the family were awake, he reached his own door about half-past nine, and felt that there was a certain gravity in the manners of his two old servants, Saunders and Callender, when he thanked them for their attentive kindness, which made him unwilling to ask questions.

He went at once to his smoking-room. His Aunt Hitchcock, he was told, was still at breakfast ;

he seemed to perceive by instinct that Saunders knew he did not want to see her. But his mother, he was told, "was mightily pleased when she heard you was coming. She took it very dutiful and kind of you, sir."

Presently his mother sent for him. She was not looking at all ill, was in bed of course, and seemed extremely low. If she had been well he might have called it cross. She shed tears when she talked to him, and complained grievously of her various discomforts.

But Tom?

Saunders was waiting outside to show him into Tom's room; he had been carried into the first that was reached at the top of the stairs, the best bedroom in the house.

He saw the strong elderly nurse who had been sent from London the evening before. Tom merely turned his head slightly and looked at him. "I hoped you would come," was all he said.

A tray stood on the bed—a tray with four short legs. Tom had been breakfasting on cold partridge, fried bacon, and coffee. He could eat well, evidently; but his face had a changed expression which made him look ten years older, a kind of patient gloom which was sullen too, and altogether pathetic. He glanced after the nurse as she left the room.

"She's been hauling me about," he said in a low dull voice. "Pleasant for a fellow, isn't it?"

"Well, dear boy," said Andrew, "you'll soon be better. It was very unfortunate, but we must make

the best of it, I suppose. I'm awfully sorry."

"Yes," he thought; "but I wish I knew *what* to be sorry for."

At that moment the doctor was announced, and Andrew left Tom, meeting Saunders outside, and being told that Dr. West wished to see him before he left the house. A pleasant capable-looking man was Mr. West.

"What is the matter with my brother Tom?" exclaimed Andrew, as soon as he came into the room.

"Well," said the doctor, quietly, "I almost thought he might have told you—for I feel nearly certain he knows, poor fellow."

"Is he in such danger, then?"

"Not of his life, but he will be a cripple, I am afraid, Mr. Capper. I see no hope of his ever standing on his legs again."

"Oh, how shocking!"

"Yes, and you will feel that I should naturally desire to have another opinion—a first-rate opinion."

"Of course, of course, any one you please; but is this wretched thing decided?"

"Well, you may be allowed a little hope, unless my view should be confirmed."

"I thought he seemed very dull and low."

"I have not said anything of this to his mother, she appears to forbode nothing; let her have a few more days to get on; and if *he* does not know, it should be broken to him. Your coming home so far must show him that you consider the matter most important."

Then as the young Squire said nothing, the

doctor sat down as if to give him time to consider the matter.

"There will be a large fee," he presently remarked; "but that, I dare say, you are prepared for," and he named a well-known surgeon whom he meant to have down.

Andrew put that matter aside with a gesture. "It's an awful thing," he said, "to have to tell one's own brother, and he is barely seventeen, and never had a day's illness in his life."

"Well, it would hardly do to send his aunt to him. I understand from your butler that he positively declines to have her in his room, and in fact requested her to absent herself. He was feverish, and she actually took it amiss, and asked in a huff whom he would prefer. He said, 'The footman.'"

"I should not like to have a lady about me if I were ill," said Andrew, excusing him; "unless it were my mother. What must I say?"

"You can at least tell him that I asked for another opinion, and said the case was serious."

So the doctor took his leave, and the young Squire shortly went back into his mother's room, because he heard that his aunt and cousin were there. They were his guests, and he must now go and speak to them.

He knew every expression of his mother's face and every tone of her voice so well that he was quite aware in an instant of a certain uneasiness.

"Yes, but now Andrew is come," she was saying, "you and Antoinette need not shut yourselves up with me. You have been here four days al-

ready. I know he will sit with me this afternoon, and I should like you to take a nice long drive. It is quite mild."

Andrew permitted himself to smile furtively.

Antoinette was working at a tambourine-frame ; she had on a blue dress of most becoming make, and looked extremely pretty. But, as Andrew had said, there was no contrast ; she was very like his mother and hers. Mrs. Hitchcock, however, was stout, in fact almost ponderous. She was about ten years older than Mrs. Capper, and looked it. Andrew mentioned a certain drive that he should like them to take.

"Oh," said his aunt, "we can surely wait till you feel that you can go with us. I did not come here to enjoy myself taking drives in the country. We shall be quite satisfied to go about your pretty place—and if you only came down for half an hour for a game at tennis, that would be quite exercise and change enough."

"Tennis," exclaimed the young Squire. "I had no notion, aunt, that you ever played tennis."

His aunt drew herself up, she was irritated at this speech ; of course she had not meant to play herself and she knew that he knew it !

"Oh, I hope you and Antoinette will take a drive, Lucia," said his mother in a conciliatory tone—and Mrs. Hitchcock somewhat abruptly consented. Andrew hardly knew whether his last speech had been most rude to his aunt or most dutiful to his mother. Yes ; in his own mind he even used the word *dutiful*. "Poor dear mother !"

he thought. "She does not know what is before her. Tom a helpless cripple for good and all. No ; she shall not be made uneasy as regards Antoinette, I am determined." At that instant the luncheon-bell rang, and Andrew conducted his aunt downstairs.

At luncheon he felt very dull. There was, however, only his little brother Martin present, so his aunt and cousin had him to themselves, and the judicious flattery of the elder lady, and the pretty face and the pretty ways of the younger, together with the deep interest she bestowed on his talk about Rome, at last put him into better spirits, so that he did not desert them till the carriage came round and he had seen them into it.

Then with a sigh he went up to his mother.

"You naughty boy," she said to him affectionately, and laughed ; "how could you say such a rude thing to your aunt ?"

"Perhaps I did it to please you," he answered.

"But, mother, it was awkward for me your showing such anxiety to get Antoinette out of the house, just because I am in it. Oh, mamma, do you really think, if there was only one girl in the world, that I would not rather be hanged than marry *her*, and have Aunt Hitchcock for a mother-in-law ?"

The mother smiled yet more contentedly.

"Haven't I seen Aunt Hitchcock politely nagging at you by the hour together, giving you her advise about us, when you were so much worse off than she was?—and, well, haven't I heard you say very *engaging* things to her too ?"

"My dear!" said his mother in mild, very mild expostulation.

"Patronizing you too! Oh, yes, I remember it well enough; just as if you could help being so much younger than she was; and just as if you were not *always* darning our socks, and patching our breeks; and soaping us up, and brushing us up. What would she have had, I wonder!"

"Well," said his mother, so much moved and pleased with this tribute that it almost consoled her for the presence of her sister; "but she did know you were coming, Andy; she set off within an hour of the arrival of your telegram to Cousin Daisy. She was with her when it came."

"I had not seen her since I got the estate," said Andrew, thoughtfully. "She was so sweet; she seemed to appreciate one in such an affectionate fashion. Yes, now I think of it, her manners are wonderfully changed."

"You must look out, A. G. Capper," he thought to himself. "Tommy Hitchcock's mother is much more clever than you are."

"But, my dear," said Mrs. Capper, "now she and Antoinette are out of the house, you need not stay with me. Go to Tom and cheer him up. I am afraid he is more hurt than I supposed, for I hear that he has not begun to sit up yet at all."

So Andrew rose to go with no more words; there was no object just yet in making his mother miserable, and he must go and say something to Tom, for he had promised.

As he went down the corridor he saw that elderly

nurse walking in a business-like fashion along the drive, and remembered that his aunt had said it was agreed that every nurse from the Institution she came from should have an hour each day for exercise.

He went into the room, and his heart sank when he saw Tom lying like a log, and his little dog sitting on his feet, watching him with a dumb, pathetic attention.

"Good dog," said Andrew, pulling the creature's ear. "You are sure Mumbo does not hurt your feet, old fellow?"

"Lying on them?" answered Tom, in the same low dull tone as before. "No; to tell you the truth, I should hardly know I had any feet."

Andrew uttered some exclamation of dismay.

Tom did not look at him, and after a pause went on in the same dim, far-away voice—

"You know the mare's broke her knees?"

"What do I care about that!" cried Andrew bitterly, and almost irritably.

"I know you don't," answered Tom, with just a little more life in his voice; "if she had broken her back you wouldn't have cared. She could have been shot—and I can't."

"Mr. West assured me that you were not in any danger," said Andrew, and he knew not what else to say. He could not possibly face his brother, and he walked to the window.

"I say, And," said Tom, when he seemed to have been standing there some minutes.

"Yes."

"You needn't think I don't know."

"It's a very serious accident, of course, dear fellow," answered Andrew, with a catch in his voice, and not venturing to turn round; "we both know that."

"Yes; what's the use of your choking yourself about it? Why, I should not have expected you, even if I was to die, to do that."

"Shouldn't you?" was all Andrew could say, and presently Tom went on in the same dim tone, as if he wanted to make the best of it to his brother.

"It'll be a nuisance for you. Perhaps they may be able to strap me up somehow, so that I can sit in a chair—but as to walking!"

"I hope it may not be so bad as you think," exclaimed Andrew, mastering himself, and turning round. "There's a first rate fellow coming down to-morrow to overhaul you—and, Tommy, Mr West said we were not to give up hope; I was to tell you how serious it was, but you were not to give up hope till the new doctor has given his opinion."

"He thinks at any rate that I shall live, then."

"He assured me of that; I told you so."

"And I am not quite to give up hope of getting well."

He turned his head on the pillow when he heard this, and instead of appearing pleased, all that dull calm left him, his lips began to quiver, his chest to heave, and he presently gave way to an agony of tears, and cried as if his heart would break. Andrew fetched him eau-de-Cologne, water to drink,

salts to smell, but for a time the poor fellow could not recover himself. At last he struggled to speak, and while his little dog showed every token of distress and tenderness, and his brother leaned over him with alarm, the schoolboy managed to utter these words—

“ Bolt the door.”

No ; even at that extremity he did not want the nurse or anybody else to see how he was crying.

Andrew understood perfectly ; the door was bolted, and he gradually recovered himself.

II.

"THE MERRY DAYS WHEN WE WERE YOUNG."

"No, not to-day," thought the young Squire, "I need not write to Fergus to-day to put off returning. As well wait till after this opinion has been given."

But when it had been given the two doctors had not spoken half so decidedly either to Tom or to himself as he had expected ; and on reflection he perceived plainly, as he thought, that the difference between them really had been as to whether his poor young brother would survive at all, not whether he would ever walk again.

"He has every comfort and luxury possible, sir," said the great man, drawing on his gloves. "And—and I shall hear from Mr. West frequently. As to your ordering any sort of chair or sofa?—No, sir, I think that would be premature. He has youth on his side, and must be kept from brooding if possible."

Tom was too much exhausted during the rest of that day to take much notice of his fellow-creatures ; he liked to have his dog on the pillow, and that

was all. But when Andrew came in the next morning after breakfast, he found him quite cheerful, and playing at dominoes with the nurse.

Presently there was a knock at the door—another—and a little yapping and squeaking was heard outside. The nurse went to open it.

“Tommy!” exclaimed little Martin, “Saunders thought you’d like to see your puppies.”

The good woman let him in with one little fox-terrier puppy under each arm. Callender’s grandson, a boy about his own age, followed with two more. Yes; Tommy evidently did like it.

“Grandfather says they’ll be wo’th three or four pound a piece, and did ought to go to London to the dog show when they be a little bigger, sir,” said Danny Callender.

He was quite lifted out of himself in the joy and pride of having something to do with these precious little animals, which, being set on the counterpane, crawled towards Tom and licked him, and then set their small white teeth in the fine linen sheets. The dog Mumbo immediately jumped off the bed, and walked into a corner in a high state of sulks.

“Blessed little beggars!” exclaimed Tom, ecstatically. “They’ll never know much about me though,” he went on ruefully, “for of course I can’t have them up in this room often,” and he looked round the handsome apartment.

“Why not?” said Andrew. “Martin, you and Danny may bring them up every morning about this time to see their master.”

"Oh, well, if you don't mind," said Tom, "I should like it."

"Well, now," said the nurse, joyfully, "see what it is to get a country patient, so fond of dogs, and cats too,—but especially dogs,—as I am, and never get a chance to see 'em. Why, sir, I'll be bound there's such a thing as a mackintosh in the house: it could be spread on the bed when they're coming, and then you could feed them as easy as not, both with their milk and their food, pretty dears."

Andrew thought the kind creature was speaking more in Tom's interest than in her own.

"Yes, Mrs. Blount," he answered, "a mackintosh shall come up to-morrow morning."

In the meantime the three boys and the nurse kissed and fondled the puppies one after the other and Mumbo occasionally made a grumbly noise, interspersed with a yap or two from his place in the corner.

"May I come in?" said a persuasive voice at the door.

"Say 'yes,'" whispered Andrew, "this is as good a time as any, and you must see her sometimes."

So Tom did say "Yes," and the stout aunt came in with Antoinette behind her.

The nurse rose and brought forward two chairs. It proved afterwards that this was not "as good a time as any," for Mrs. Hitchcock's eyes took in everything; and as to the puppies on the bed, she was annoyed and horrified. And then there were

the two little boys, both with shoes much the worse for clay and mud.

"I can very easy sweep that up, 'm," quoth the nurse, when she saw Mrs. Hitchcock's look of dismay.

She carried her eye round the room, noticed and allowed them to rest on a breakfast tray with the remains of a luxurious breakfast left on it still in the room, a fire with the hearth not yet swept up, and some empty medicine-glasses left about.

"I hadn't had time to *redd* up when the master he came in," said the nurse.

Andrew saw her color, and felt that she cared more for one look of disapproval from his aunt than from anything he might see or say. She knows I am almost, *as it were*, a boy, was his thought ; but she just suits Tom. And I hope aunt Hitchcock won't disgust her with the place. After all, what right has she to object if I don't mind the dogs and the clay ? So he looked up and said suavely—

"Sit down, Mrs. Blount. Who has so good a right to make herself at home in this room as you have ?"

Mrs. Blount looked at him, and her whole countenance changed.

"Thank you, sir, I'm sure," she said, and she sat down ; but she made a courtesy to him first, saying, "I had a-rung for the maid that in general reds up the room, for it's not my place to do it. I expect she did not come in because you was here, sir."

Mrs. Hitchcock now looked most gracious ; the

nurse was mistress of the situation, and appeared, as well as the aunt, cousin, Squire, and Tom, to listen to the discourse of the small brother Martin, who with his young ally Danny was giving an account of the digging out of a rat's nest from one of the bunks outside the hot-house.

"The old rat bit Callender on his thumb," said Martin.

And the other little urchin piped out, "Grandfather didn't care no more than nowt."

"Why not?" asked Tom, amused at his eagerness.

"'Cause them rats make holes in the drains, and lets the water through to *his* grapes! They won't do that no more,—they're drowned."

After this, boys, puppies, and the ladies, with Andrew, had a hint to withdraw from the nurse. Mr. Tom must be got ready to see the doctor; and likewise have his draught, and rest a bit.

As they came downstairs, the boys with the yapping puppies under their arms, Andrew said—

"You can ask your grandfather, Danny, to send in a fine bunch of grapes for Mr. Tom's lunch; and tell him I say that he's to give you and master Martin each one of the biggest pears he can find in the fruit-house."

The little fellows both looked up with incredulous delight; they had come up rather on the sly. Martin hoped for nothing better than to escape a chiding—for Saunders had said no more than that *some day* he might possibly be allowed to take them into Mr. Tom's room; he had immediately

enlisted the other little urchin in the affair, and they had watched their opportunity, and slipped upstairs when nobody was looking. And now, behold, they were to be rewarded.

"Do you think mother would like to see them?" asked Martin.

"No," said Andrew, "I'm sure she wouldn't. There, take them away."

"Wasn't it lucky?" he went on to Antoinette. "It's the first time I've seen poor Tom laugh since I came home."

"It was quite an inspiration," she answered, in a tone of the sweetest sympathy.

"Antoinette's rather a nice girl," thought the young Squire, "considering her mother."

After that Antoinette was often made welcome to come and sit by Tom; but excepting the first time, her mother did not accompany her. She never ventured inside that door again, for two or three days after the visit of the puppies, while his nurse was out for her walk, Tom had them both with him when little Martin's well-known thump was heard.

"Come in," shouted Tom.

Martin put in his beautiful little face.

"Oh, Tom!" he exclaimed, "there's another nest found. Oh! such rum little things; Danny's got them in his cap."

"Poor little creatures," said Mrs. Hitchcock, thinking of nothing worse than young birds.

"Bring 'em here," said Tom.

And the gardener's grandson bore in half a dozen

pink, skinny little wretches, with hardly any down on them ; they were accommodated in some wool in his cap. Rats, of course.

"Callender says we must look out," said Martin, "for they can bite like anything."

"Oh !" exclaimed Mrs. Hitchcock, turning extremely pale and shuddering. "Oh, my child ! help me out ! help me !"

The boys, including Tom, were too much absorbed to notice this for the moment ; and Mrs. Hitchcock had been successfully pulled up by her daughter, and trembling all over, was gazing towards the door, when one of the little creatures, not quite so infantine and helpless as had been supposed, suddenly sprang out of the cap, and began to career about the bed. Then Aunt Hitchcock totally forgot her dignity. Another was presently out, and sprang down to the floor with a thump that one would have thought must have made an end of him ; but, no, he scuttled across the carpet, and Mrs. Hitchcock screamed, and tried to get up on to a chair.

"Here, you monkeys. Ring the bell ! ring, I say. Aunt, they can't hurt you !" exclaimed Tom.

Martin set the cap down on the bed and rang with a will ; but before the nurse ran in, followed by both Saunders and the footman, the little rats were loose all over the room. Antoinette was in tears, and Mrs. Hitchcock had fainted away.

There was a great deal of fanning and clapping of her palms ; smelling-bottles were applied to her nose, and then the footman, called off from chasing

the young rats, assisted Mr. Saunders in lifting her on to a sofa.

Meanwhile, the little boys were supremely happy, though, to be sure, each of them got a bite ; but Mumbo on the whole was the hero of that occasion, for he shortly jumped upon the bed, and presented one of the little beasts quite dead to his master ; in fact, before the boys had accounted for three of the quarry, Mumbo had laid the other three in a row on his pillow.

The nurse looked anxiously at Tom, but his enjoyment of the chase was manifest.

There was only one rushing about the room, and there was joyous barking not a little still, when Mrs. Hitchcock opened her eyes and sighed deeply.

"Now, then, miss," said the nurse, "we had need get your ma out of the room as fast as we can, or she will go off again to a certainty."

So the stout lady, with the aid of Saunders and the footman, was wheeled away to her own room, her attentive daughter following ; and almost immediately after Danny Callender uttered a yell, which spoke for the excellence of his lungs. He had got hold of the last rat and it had bitten him ; but Mumbo soon finished him, and laid him in the row beside his brothers.

"It was awkward for me, so it was, Mr. Saunders," said the nurse, when, some days after, she was taking a cup of tea with the butler in his pleasant little carpeted parlor.

"Well, so it was, ma'am ; but, by all I hear,

the young master himself is totally pleased with your medications."

"And I've long made up my mind," continued Mrs. Blount reflectively, "not to heed a side wind, when, as one may say, I'm coming right up the river with a spring tide."

"You're right, ma'am. Still, if we'd known the rats could run, we'd better by half have let 'em go up in a cage than in that young urchin's cap."

"I hear *she*," said the nurse (*she* was Mrs. Hitchcock), "she told Mrs. Capper the nurse was in a manner more neg-glectful than could be wished. What a shame it was there should be all that messing in that best bedroom. Silk curtains and all to the windows, a handsome carpet, and bright bars to the grate, is not fit for a sick room. 'Twas that maid that reds up the room told me—she heard it. 'Oh,' says Mrs. Capper, poor soul, —little knowing, — 'it'll soon be over, Lucia. Those sprains and bruises, or whatever they are, can't last long, and then he can go up to the room he had before.'"

"D'ye think he'll live through it, ma'am?"

"Well, you see, Mr. Saunders, when doctors differ, as the saying is, a nurse can't hold by both of them. I think he'll live and sit up. I told the young master so this blessed morning. He was pleased. He's a good sort."

"So he is," said Mr. Saunders, cordially.

"But she have not appeared so well ever since that fainting fit. Seems to me she's looking out for rats and mice everywhere."

"Well, ma'am, far let it be from me to make an interregnum between you and your young gentleman ; but p'raps—p'raps, I say, and say no more, she don't get quite as much sleep as she might wish for." Mrs. Blount colored and looked attentive. "I was waiting at dinner—was it three days ago? I think it was,—when Miss Antoinette was talking very much, she was, about Mr. Tom. They had two or three folks in that day ; Miss had her pink on, and looked like a rose. 'Yes,' says Mr. Capper, 'I was pleased to-day when Tom asked me to let him have my flute. It showed he felt able to amuse himself, poor boy.'"

"Ay, he did. The young Squire brought it down, and a lot of music. 'I'll give it you,' said he ; and they were oiling and screwing and blowing at it for ever so long. And it's true, Mr. Saunders, the patient was very restless that night. It may have been ten o'clock when he had a bad bout of pain. After that he said he couldn't sleep, and asked me to give him the flute."

"And he was playing on it a good while after midnight, wasn't he?"

"Well, yes, but he's a long way from his ma's room. She couldn't ha' heard him."

"But there's only the dressing-room between him and Mrs. Hitchcock."

"That's right, Mr. Saunders."

"And it was just the same last night, wasn't it? I came out and listened, for I sleep on the ground-floor. 'No,' I said, 'it's not "waits," too dismal,' for it seemed such a wailing demonstration, and I

got out into the hall, and then higher and higher up the front stairs, and I said, 'that's "The merry days when we were young," if ever I heard it blown up before.'"

"Well, he did seem to play the same tune a very great many times, I do allow ; and it was not as you might say cheerful, that's true, sir. He's learning it, I expect."

"Nobody could sleep near that, ma'am."

"I could, but then I'm used to catch up my sleep when I've a chance. I went both nights into the dressing-room, for I sleep there with the door open, and laid myself down ; and when the noise of the flute had done it woke me, and I slipped out and saw him gone to sleep, and the flute beside him. I took it away and turned down the lamp, but whether that was two o'clock or later I couldn't say."

Mrs. Hitchcock was a very affectionate parent, even rats and mice were not enough to make her give up, as she thought, her daughter's interests. When the flute wailed long, and there was a great many false notes in the night, she sometimes wavered, especially when the same tune was played more than a dozen times, with generally the same mistake at the same point in it. Then she sometimes thought she must and would go ; but turning her face, and seeing her pretty daughter fast asleep beside her, she would leave her decision to the morning, and then she generally decided to stay on, even though not a single word was said by her

sister or Andrew expressive of a wish to keep her there.

"No," she would consider, "I must do my duty by my child, however much Mary may dislike it. Certainly Andrew is more inclined to joke and flirt with her—seems to like her singing better, and goes with her more about the garden than he did. To be sure he never rides or drives with her, but that would attract his mother's attention. I never—no, I never did see a son so completely under his mother's thumb as he is. Perhaps, if it came to pass he would be just as much under mine. In such a case Mary would live in the dower-house, and if the thing was inevitable she would not visit her displeasure on Antoinette—only on me. Besides—" Here she laughed, but she did not finish her sentence.

When Andrew had said, "I need not write to-day to put off returning," he had felt much more sanguine both as to his mother's speedy recovery and as to Tom's condition than he could be after. In another day he felt, as in schoolboy phraseology he expressed the matter, that "it was no go." He wrote to Fergus, asked him to go on to Cairo, and "do Egypt," go up the Nile, for instance, and then in three or four months he might join him, and they could go somewhere together.

Fergus was almost wrath about it at first. It seemed such a shame that Andrew should be kept at home. However, he would make his "yarns" as long as he could.

He speedily got over to Malta, and so to Alex-

andria, by a somewhat cheaper line than the well-known P. & O., for now Andrew was gone he wanted to see as much as he could for the money.

He was so immensely happier than he had ever been in his life ; every hour was so full, for luckily he was not seasick, and it seemed impossible to do more than jot down mere scraps to make a sort of journal ; but within three days of getting to Alexandria, having seen what he thought truly worth describing, he shut himself up. The mail was to go out the very next morning, and he wrote the first long letter he had ever produced in his career. Yes, he was determined to do his duty by Andrew.

“DEAR A.,

“I must not waste words. Hope dear mother is better, and Tom, too. Unless he’s still very seedy, he will like to get *James’s Naval History* and see where I’ve been, etc.

“First, I crossed from Malta. Oh, you fellows ! I never could have imagined anything so glorious as this is ! Well, crossing, I made acquaintance with a stupid family—a tiresome old father, with the Romanest nose you ever saw, always trying to improve them. They had lots of books, maps, and handbooks—I liked to have the use of them.

“The Pharos of Alexandria ! Ha ! we passed almost close to it. There was a pale blue sea, absolutely calm, the reflection of it seemed to lie out of the water for miles. We steamed through it and broke it, and just before we got in, the whole

water and the air and the shore turned the brightest pink you ever set your eyes on, and the whole world appeared to be transparent ; it was still this color when three or four stars shot out, and quivered just as if they were alive.

“Well, I was tired, and I slept like anything till one of the boys—the Mansfield boys—banged at my door. His father had hired a launch with two or three other people ; would I pay my share and go too ? They were going to see the sunken ships out in Aboukir Bay—the ships of that French fleet, you know, which were sunk under Nelson when he commanded at the battle of the Nile. I did not know anything particular about it, but I said I would join. Poor little wretch, he had been so sea-sick that he hardly cared for anything yet, excepting to eat and drink. They used to shake him up though, and made him look when there was anything special to be seen. Sometimes he cried in his misery ;—he was barely fourteen. The two girls are prigs. Excepting their father, I never saw more universal fools ; they never enjoy anything for fear they should lose some of it. They are miserable, like their father, unless they sweep up every scrap of wisdom and annex it, and remember it too.

“I had some breakfast, and dashed out into the sunshine to see Africa. Curious sensation being in Africa. We were not to start till the light was right, so as to get to the ships about three or four o’clock, I understood, and they are six or seven miles out to sea.

"So I went forth on my first expedition. I don't consider myself exactly in the light of an African explorer yet, but I saw some unexpected things, in fact they were so evident that they almost slapped me as it were in the face. Your Egyptian is so very brown, and the calves of his legs are so small, and the white of his eyes are so very white, and he jabbars so. The streets and buildings a little disappointed me, they are so uncommonly like the photographs, but the light is so clear. I held up my hand and could almost see through it. And the women, going about bundled up like featherbeds, looked so queer. Now one thing I did feel indignant at, they are some of them extremely fat. You never see them represented as fat in a picture. I was so angry that I said aloud—

" 'It's a shame. I did not come all this way to see them roll about like porpoises.'

" 'Yes, it is a shame,' said somebody standing close behind me, and I saw a pretty American girl, who seemed to have been running after me. She could not find her hotel—where was it? could I help?

"It was the same I was in, so she stayed with me, and we enjoyed ourselves a good deal; for of course I never lose my way—I am thus marked out for an explorer.

"Well, I took this Miss Hislop home to her people—an uncle and a sister. They wanted me to have lunch with them; I told them of the expedition, and they wished to go too. So I ran to Mr. Mansfield, and got that managed. Then

we gave our minds to finding something about the Battle of the Nile, and all that. I said I thought it was nearly a hundred years ago ; but I could not come nearer than that. But they have read English history, and remembered it rather better than I did. Also they knew something about a paper which had come out in *Blackwood's Mag.* about these very ships.

"They said one of the French ships was called *La Sérieuse*. But we thought, and do still, that there were at least two sunk beside the flagship, the celebrated *L'Orient*.

"However, we did not see more than one ; but that is anticipating. One of the girl's (mine) is very pretty, they called her Tammy, the other is a one-er. She treated me as if I was a mere boy. She is ugly ; her name is Julie. The uncle is a complete nobody ; we all decided that he should go too—so of course he did. I can't tell it all.

"Well, think we are on board. The polish of the pale blue sea was such that you could hardly look at it. It spread out like the largest looking-glass that ever was invented ; it spread out and scarcely trembled at the edges, here and there a long way off, a sweep, like a wedge, of white ducks, flew on.

"The Mansfields were serious ; oh, that Roman nose, how Mansfield *père* talked through it, and exhorted the girls.

"'You remember, my dear *gurls*, of course, that Nelson was Rear-Admiral of the Blue at that time?'

" 'Of course, father.'

"Then Tammy walked up to him and asked the exact date.

" 'Nelson,' he said, with pity unspeakable at her ignorance, 'Nelson defeated the French at the Battle of the Nile on the first of August, 1798.'

"She shivered a little, his air was so cold and grave, but she presently said—

" 'And how is it we are going straight to the place? I see no buoy or anything to guide us.'

" 'There were proper bearings taken, careful bearings,' said the elder of the two *gurls*.

" 'Oh !'

" 'Yes, of course.'

"Tammy sneaked off with me.

" 'Never mind,' she said, 'we know now, and you didn't dare to ask yourself.'

"The little wretch of a launch, which was just like a shabby dirty steam-tug, went blundering on, and sent rings all around us, just as a duck does when it swims on a pond. We felt how small the thing was, and how small we were compared with the world, which was all so vast, and empty, and light about us.

"Not taking the least notice of us, or aware of us at all ; however, we met with a nice Englishman, who was up to the whole affair, and told us without any scorn.

" 'It was nearly sunset,' he said—I remembered it all as he told us—'when Nelson and his fleet sighted the French fleet at anchor. Most of Nelson's ships got safely through the passage into

Aboutkir Bay, so that they were nearer to the shore than the enemy ; but some remained north-east of the French, so that those poor beggars had them on both sides. By early starlight the fight began, and they blazed at one another, so that the shore and the little towns all about were light with the glare, and stunned with the noise. Two at least of the French ships had been sunk, and some had surrendered, when about midnight the great French three-decker, *L'Orient*, bearing the Admiral's flag, caught fire, and blew up with such an awful explosion, that both French and English ceased firing for some time, and there was not a sound to be heard but the splash of her spars and pieces of her rigging and her timbers as they came down blazing from an immense height, and fell upon the other ships, both friends and foes.

“Well, after this awful pause they began to thunder at one another again, and in the midst of it, and while neither side ceased, *L'Orient* began to sink. A great cry went up, and both Nelson and the French manned boats to pick up her crew, and did so as well as they could even in the midst of the heavy fire ; but she settled more and more, and soon, in about eight or nine fathoms, went down.

“And there she is lying on the sandy bottom of Aboutkir Bay to this hour. In fact, it is only a little more than fifty feet of water that she lies in.’

“We looked down presently over the bulwarks, for the little tug stopped her engines, and we heard that she was close over the place where one of the smaller ships was known to lie. Our

launch seemed to be drifting on very slightly by her own impetus, and the water, now it was absolutely still, became inexpressibly clear. I could see the bottom perfectly well ; we noticed a whole shoal of longish green fish swimming under us, when suddenly I saw lying on the bottom, a little way off, not upright but her keel towards us, and slightly on her side, a ship. I seized Tammy by the waist.

“ ‘Look !’ I exclaimed, ‘there she is.

“This was not *L'Orient*, they told us, but the other, a treasure-ship called the *Maza Mundo*. She was in about forty feet of water. Every one rushed to the fore part of the launch as she floated on, and became silent. You never saw anything in your life so pathetic. Tammy began to cry. It was very extraordinary. The ship had the effect of not being made of wood, but of a delicate kind of stone ; all her port-holes could be clearly seen in the translucent sea ; you could see every plank under this casing as it lapped over the next.

“One does not often see the bottom of the ocean, to be sure ; and you may depend on it, there's an extraordinary silence down there.

“Well, I can't explain to you how it was, or why it was. It was not that I was sorry for the French, but for us all. We last such a little time, and all we do is of so little consequence ; now it seemed as if we had come here that this might be shown to us.

“However, when we had looked a good while, and heard that this ship, if it was the one supposed,

had a lot of treasure in it, we went on ; and when the water was all one flood of rose-color, the engine stopped again. And now I'll tell you something extraordinary : we saw the shadow of our own launch at the bottom of the sea ! It was lengthened out of course a good deal, as our own shadows were, seen on the deck, but there could be no doubt what it was. After stopping and going on—and muddling about a little—we again caught sight of a ship. She stood straight upright, and this was *L'Orient*.

“ A much larger thing, a grand old three-decker, but with a sort of gulf amidships, where the great piece of deck, with her masts and rigging, had been blown out. She also looked as if she had been made of stone. They say she is full of treasure, for in her hold is known to be the silver she was bringing out for the payment of the French sailors' wages ; and also she had on board two enormous silver gates that had been stolen out of a church at Malta.

“ The red light of the sun appeared to get down into the very depths of the sea, and all her port-holes (three tiers of them) were edged with rose-color.

“ Well, it was all most beautiful, and that wreck was grander and more shapely than the other ; but it was not the first, and I did not feel that kind of pathos in it ; and while we were speeding back to get over the six miles in time for the hotel dinner, I saw something I wanted to point out to the nice

one of the two Hislops. I incautiously called to her—

“ ‘Tammy.’

“ ‘You should have heard how the other one flew at me. Well, I made all sorts of excuses. I didn’t want after a little while to be bothered with the subject.

“ ‘The elder one was terribly in earnest. Tammy only laughed. At last I said—

“ ‘Well, I’ve made as many apologies as I can; and after all, what does it signify? for you know very well that when we have once parted to-night I shall never see any of you any more so long as I live.’

“ ‘The uncle immediately answered—

“ ‘What’ll you bet?’

“ ‘Nothing,’ I said; ‘I mean to spend every shilling I have in seeing the world, so if I meet you after that I shall have nothing to pay with.’

“ ‘No matter,’ he answered; ‘bet, sir. And it shall be *heads I lose, and tails you win.*’

“ ‘Very well, then,’ I said; ‘I bet you a sovereign that we shall never meet again.’

“ ‘Well, I’ve no more space. I go on to Cairo to-morrow. Love to mother and you all.

“ ‘Your affectionate brother,

“ ‘FERGUS CAPPER.”

III.

“AND WE NEVER COULD BEAR THE CAPPERS.”

Now Fergus had intended to amuse them all at home ; Andrew as well as the invalids.

Andrew had the latter on his hands, and Fergus was deeply grateful to him for having let him escape and go on. He thought he would do his duty by him to the best of his ability. It was unlucky that his letter should have had much the reverse of a cheering effect, but so it was.

Andrew, who had begun almost to tolerate his aunt, to amuse himself with Antoinette, and occupy his time with his invalids, his place, and his dependents, felt for a few days after its arrival perfectly miserable. He went back for the time into boyhood, was a little brusque with his guests, loomed about in his grounds in a disconsolate fashion, and took such slight notice of the pretty cousin, that she observed the change with even more chagrin than her mother did.

Yes, the chance of his tour was over. He should not be able to join Fergus for a very long time. His mother did not yet know how slight Tom's chance was of ever going into any profession and getting his own living ; did not know how utterly

helpless he still was, and that he had sometimes hours of pain, after which he could not occupy himself even with the reading, talking, and playing at chess which generally helped to while away his time.

Tom was pleased, however, with the letter, and was found by Andrew two or three days after with it open before him, and Antoinette sitting by him. They had cut some corks into many little rounds, and each being divided in half was supposed to represent a ship. Tom, with the aid of some diagrams in a book of naval history, was going over the manœuvres, and following the details of Nelson's sea-fights.

Antoinette was very sick of it, but it had been of her own proposing ; and though she longed as Andrew came in and out of the room to jump up and go with him, she knew that would not do at all; she must appear to devote herself to the invalid.

But she was destined to be unlucky that day. Andrew came in for the third time, and she could not help noticing that he seemed a little restless.

"I say, Tommy," he observed, "I'm going to London."

Tom looked up a little anxiously.

"It's dull if you're not here," he said in rather a pleading tone. "You'll not be away long?"

"Oh, no ; only two or three days."

Here was a vexation ! Antoinette colored. "Two or three days !" she was on the point of saying, but happily checked herself.

"Well," she presently remarked, answering the

least little look from the nurse, "I'll leave you, Tom, now, and we can finish this afterwards."

"I thought Miss never would go," said the ungrateful Mrs. Blount. "Now then, look here, sir, if you please." She showed the brothers some pictures of certain curious pieces of upholstery. "You see there's a sort of a screw or a winch in this, and when a patient's lying flat on his back and this is under him, with a small soft mattress on it, why you begin to wind if you please, and so he's gently heaved up without being touched. Then when he wants to lie flat again, you can take and wind him down. It's a lovely invention."

Andrew, after his interview with Tom and the nurse, came into the drawing-room to mention his intended absence to his aunt and cousin.

"Well, and so you are going away, you recreant knight," said his aunt, laughing, with rather an unsuccessful attempt to appear amused and pleased.

"Yes, aunt. The fact is, it is because you are here that I venture to do it. It is now time that Tom should have a sofa and some sort of chair too, and besides, there must be an apparatus for lifting him in his bed. But mother—(I was considering how I could go and choose them, and mother not think it odd)—when she happened to say she knew you were going to stay with her till after next Sunday."

Mrs. Hitchcock looked up surprised.

"Stay with *her*," she thought. "Oh, then, Mary puts it in that light."

"Yes. It seems you said you were so looking

forward to hearing that missionary bishop who is to preach for his black or brown or yellow Christians, whichever they are, next Sunday morning."

"Ah, yes," said the aunt, "I did say so."

"So I said I had wished very much to go up to town just for two or three days, and as she was sure my aunt would be able to stay,—and she said, 'Go at once then, I shall not be dull.'"

("Of course you said so, Mary," thought Mrs. Hitchcock. "Yes, I know what it means.")

Antoinette did not pretend to look otherwise than annoyed and disappointed. She cast a reproachful glance at him, but he did not meet it; he was looking out at the window, and he sighed.

"No, he did not get this up himself," thought Mrs. Hitchcock; "but he would not have fallen into the plan nevertheless if he had cared to stay."

Andrew hung about for two or three minutes more, then he shook hands with his aunt and cousin and went off.

"Mother," exclaimed Antoinette, indignantly, "you cannot possibly now wish to stay beyond next Monday or Tuesday; we have been here more than three weeks."

Antoinette was so mortified and so angry that two large beautiful tears fell on her flushed cheeks. How handsome she looked, and how vexed her mother was!

"If you think your Aunt Mary has *made* him do this—" she began.

"I think nothing of the kind. It's only his manner to be so sweet and deferential to his mother.

They all have it ; but Andrew generally does just as he likes notwithstanding. And why did you call him a 'recreant knight' ?" she continued, with a little angry sob.

" If he does not feel that he is one, it ought to be put into his head," said the mother in a low voice. " He sometimes paid you a good deal of attention, and I dare say, when I was not by——"

" No," interrupted Antoinette ; " when we were alone he sometimes behaved like a great blunt school-boy ; and besides, you know, mother, it was not his doing that I was here to be paid attention to, and so often left alone with him."

" My dear," said her mother, in a tone of remonstrance and reproof, " I think you are forgetting yourself."

" And we never could bear the Cappers when we were children," continued Antoinette, irrelevantly. " We used to be always quarrelling. And besides that, Andrew is a year and ten months younger than I am. The manner in which those boys used to be always teasing us——"

" Here's a carriage ; there's somebody coming to call," said Mrs. Hitchcock, looking up calmly. " I think it's Mrs. Delany."

Antoinette had wiped away the two angry tears, and her eyes looked all the brighter for them. But she was deeply mortified that her mother had, as it were, thrown her at Andrew as if she had been a ball, and he had not caught her ! She felt almost undutiful for the moment, and permitted herself to say something which she knew her mother would

be uneasy at, while the coming guests were already in the hall.

"And besides that, I feel almost sure Andrew knows about our Tom being so *in love* with Daisy."

"Andrew knows that!" exclaimed Mrs. Hitchcock.

"I think he does. I am almost sure of it."

With that the visitors entered. They were very sympathetic and kind.

"And so the young Squire was out?"

"Yes, dear fellow; he had taken the opportunity, as his aunt and cousin were in the house to help with the invalid, of running up to town on some business."

"Might they see dear Mrs. Capper?"

"Antoinette should go up and see if she felt able to see the ladies of the party. She was dressed already, and on her sofa."

"The resources of science were so many more now than heretofore."

"Ah, yes, indeed."

Antoinette went up, and Mrs. Capper did see the visitors—a mother and two pretty daughters. When they were gone Mrs. Capper remarked to her sister on their beauty. "Andrew was quite struck with it," she said.

"I had not heard him mention them," observed Mrs. Hitchcock in her quietest tone. "And so he's off?"

"Yes, poor fellow, he has been very dull, almost low, since that letter from Fergus came. They had set their hearts on going together, and I felt that

he wanted a little change to divert him from his disappointment. He's going to Cousin Daisy. He was always fond of her, and she'll take him to choose some kind of thing that it seems Tommy ought to have. I hope his nurse does not coddle him too much. I sent for her yesterday to tell her so, and she seemed really quite out of countenance. It's a great temptation, you know, Lucia, to a nurse when she gets into such a comfortable place to make the case last as long as she can. However, she said she believed Mr. West would say he was satisfied with her."

Mrs. Hitchcock at that moment experienced such a sharp pang of pity for her sister, that she did not say another unpleasant word to her the whole evening.

The young Squire, meanwhile, had become more reconciled with his lot, mainly, no doubt, because he was amused and made welcome. Cousin Daisy felt what a good fellow he was, and was cordial and affectionate, while the two girls, being allowed to dine with him and their mother, were full of talk about the letter from Fergus; and when dinner was over, and the party left alone, it appeared that "Tammy" was the chief point of interest, and they began to discuss her at dessert.

"Such a name! That must be a pet name. What can the real name be?" said Daisy.

"Thomasina, I should think," remarked Bell.

"And a very ugly name too. However, it does not matter what it is. Not in the least."

"Not matter? Oh, Andrew!"

"Well?" said Andrew.

"To see you so coolly scraping the skin off your walnuts, one would think you took no interest in Fergus whatever."

Andrew looked up surprised, laid down his walnuts, dipped his fingers in the glass, and while he was drying them on his napkin, considered Daisy attentively.

"Anybody can see," said Bell in an oracular tone, "what's going to happen."

"My dear, how can you be so silly?" said her mother.

"It's Kismet, mother."

"Nothing can be so plain," exclaimed Daisy.

"That's how, *exactly* how, in a story it begins, and when you read that sort of opening you may be sure something will come of it."

"Yes," said the mother, "but if he's not a boy—I beg his pardon, I mean a young man—in a story—"

"Then," interrupted Andrew, "You may be equally sure that nothing *will* come of it."

"I shall think it very unfair if it doesn't. Why did he tell us?"

"To fill the letter, of course."

"Well," said Daisy, "I shall think it extremely unfair if nothing does come of it, and I shall begin to save my allowance for the wedding present. He is to be away three years, you said, And."

"Yes."

"But then he has been away one month.

Mother, will you stop a shilling every week of my allowance? In a hundred and forty-eight weeks that will come to seven pounds ten. No, I think it had better be two shillings a week."

"Very well, my love," said Mrs. E. Smith, composedly.

"He will have nothing to live upon," observed Andrew, "but perhaps that doesn't signify."

"Evidently not," observed Mrs. E. Smith.

"Oh," said Bell, "something will probably turn up for them to live upon. Or perhaps she's an heiress."

"No," exclaimed Andrew, "Fergus has his notions—" and then he checked himself suddenly.

"Come, come," said the mother rising. "I think, girls, you have talked enough nonsense. We will go upstairs, and Andrew can join us when he has finished his walnuts."

Daisy had one charming accomplishment—she played extremely well on the violin, and the evening passed off pleasantly enough. The next morning was devoted to the choice of the lift which Mrs. Blount had asked for, as well as to a peculiar chair, various props, and other comforts for Tom. Cousin Daisy went with Andrew to choose them, and the whole morning was spent over the matter. Then at luncheon time, when he was lamenting that he had neglected his own violin, "which you gave me, you know, Cousin Daisy," Daisy the second proposed to practise with him.

Mrs. E. Smith made no objection.

"I never could imagine why you left off playing on it, And," she said.

"But consider what a little house that was. Father for years was disturbed by the jar and twang of a fiddle, or indeed of any other instrument. I soon found that out, though he hardly ever spoke of it. Well, so I put it away, and then at school there was no time "

She smiled.

"What a little fellow you were," she said, "when you first began to play. You could not have been more than six years old when, after you had played an air that delighted you, you snatched up the fiddle in your arms, patted it and kissed it."

"I must try to get up my music again," said Andrew.

"And so '*Fergus has his notions*,' has he?" thought Mrs. E. Smith, when after lunch she was driving out in the carriage. "It is manifest what those notions are. They are as much as may be the reverse of Tom Hitchcock's notions. As for Andrew, if my girls were his sisters, his manners to them could not well be more devoid of the least symptom of flirtation. I am not sure," continued Mrs. E. Smith, thoughtfully, 'that I should mind *now* if it was not so. Bell is really too young for me to think of such a thing with reference to her at all. But Daisy—Daisy will be seventeen in a month. I am not sure, if they loved one another, that my darling would not be happier in her own rank of life than married to some great man's heir, not sure of herself, and her fortune perhaps used among

other things to pay debts of a sort I could wish she might never so much as hear of."

In the meantime the three young people were in the great drawing-room, Daisy with her violin, and Andrew with Bell's. Bell was rather tearful that day; it was always annoying to her that she played so badly, and she handed her instrument to Andrew with such a tragic air as might have been appropriate if she had never expected to use it again, whereupon he immediately attacked her about her height, teasing her.

"You remember how seriously I talked to Daisy when she was in the country, about the way that she was shooting up; and now she has no sooner stopped growing, for which, by the bye, I am pleased with her, than you set off. You are certainly taller than she is now."

"I don't care," said Bell, almost sullenly.

"I shall never be friends with you again if you overtop me," he continued.

"Well, I can't help it," retorted Bell, half laughing.

"Oh, And," said Daisy, "there's one thing we so much want to know." Andrew was tuning the fiddle, and drawing from it the most distressing discords. He looked up. "Why did mother beckon you out while old Mactaggart was putting on the coals, and talk to you on the top of the stairs? You looked quite serious when you came in."

"Ah!" said Andrew, "It may possibly be that

your mother has confided to me a most sacred trust. *Perhaps* I felt it. I did not weep though."

"Nonsense," said Bell.

"Well, I will tell you as you are a good heiress now and not tragical. She said that it was your half-holiday."

"Yes, of course it is. Why, they all know that," continued Bell.

"*They?*"

Both the girls were silent.

"And that you need not have the German governess with you this once if I would promise that you two should not be left alone. I laid my hand on my heart—at least I did nothing of the sort, but I promised. Tommy Hitchcock is always in town, and the Deans are just come up, I know. How natural that they should call on your half-holiday! How sweet is young affection!"

"There," said Bell, "you are always teasing us for talking about lovers and marrying, and we said to each other that we would not do it again, and now you have begun it yourself."

"Yes, but then I have never been your guardian before—that's an affecting position. I ought to exhort you a little."

"Oh, very well, but we are not in the drawing-room on other half-holidays, so we do not see callers. Oh, Andrew, what a shocking squeal!" said Daisy.

"Bell should not have left it out of tune, then. Yes, Tom Hitchcock knows I am here; filial piety will induce him to call and ask how his mother is.

The last time I saw him," continued Andrew pensively, "was when Fergus and I dined at Uncle Hitchcock's before we went abroad, and you happened—*happened*, I say, to be mentioned, and he gave a great sigh. It was almost like a large pair of bellows blowing."

"If you go on making such game of him you will really make me wish to take his part, poor fellow," said Daisy, laughing.

"Fergus says the cleverest part of Tom's 'involuntary flame' is that he *pretends* even to himself. He is like the man who, playing Othello, and having to black his face, blacked himself all over," continued Andrew.

"Ah," interrupted Bell, "to make even himself believe that he was a Christy minstrel."

"A what, Bell? Dear me, I remember sometimes how young you are, in spite of your stately height. No, my dear child, a Moor."

"Oh, yes, I remember, a Moor."

"Now, Daisy, I'm ready for our duet."

"I'm glad," said Daisy. "You made the fiddle howl almost as if it was alive."

Daisy and Andrew thereupon began to play, and got on very well for awhile, till he observed that both the girls were laughing. He inquired why.

"Why, because when we were last in Scotland, Algernon Dean begged us to play that very piece. He went down on his knees."

"I don't believe it. Not *both knees*!"

"He does not belong to me," said Daisy, evasively; "I think he belongs to Bell."

"But *not both knees* ; even Tom Hitchcock does not do that."

"No, not exactly, always."

"Ah, sometimes one and sometimes the other ; just so, keeps on one till that's sore, and then tries the other."

"It's what you'll do yourself when you have an 'involuntary flame,'" said Daisy, laughing.

"If one of my brothers had said so I should have answered, 'That's a story'—I might even have said, 'That's a lie'—but you being a young lady——"

"You will answer," Daisy interrupted, "'Yes, dear second-cousin-once-removed, you have experience ; I shall. '"

"No mortal 'flame' shall ever make me do it," said Andrew, "unless I have a hassock—I shall have one properly arranged beforehand, a soft one." He kicked one towards her. "Look here, Daisy, is it like this ?" and he suddenly plumped down on his knees upon it, cast up his eyes, and clasped his arms across his breast, with the bow of the violin still in one hand—

"*Mr. Thomas Hitchcock !*" said the old footman, throwing the door wide open, and as well as the visitor beholding this scene.

The footman actually gasped. The girls were so overcome with laughter that they could not in an instant recover themselves. But Tom Hitchcock by no means wanted for penetration. He perceived that Andrew as he got up from his knees had been laughing too, though he was very much

out of countenance, and a little huffy ; and he was soothed by the almost certainty that there must have been some joke.

For a few moments he did himself more credit than any of the others. This was certainly a blow, and his speaking countenance showed some agitation. He had a singularly handsome face, but he was too short for the size of his head ; was not, in fact, well proportioned. His advantages were best seen when he was the only man present, or when he was not with such tall girls. His cousin, who was nearly a year younger than himself, made him look rather thick-set and stiff, for Andrew had an easy, graceful carriage, and was well proportioned.

Tom Hitchcock, however, was very well got up, had a flower in his buttonhole, and looked quite a beau. His face got rather pale as he talked, looking at Daisy with something almost like tender reproach ; indeed his sincere and intense desire to get that ten thousand a year for himself gave a natural pathos to the tone of his voice, and a sort of yearning to the expression of his fine eyes.

But he did not have much time to play them off, for in a very few minutes that footman threw open the door again and announced Lady Dean and Captain Dean.

Then Tom Hitchcock lost his advantage. Young Dean was a tall, "well set up" young man, had a fine yellow moustache, and the two young men hated and disapproved of one another to such a

degree that it could not be concealed from any one else present, even from Daisy.

Disapproval is a word used advisedly. Each showed what a shame he thought it that the heiress at her tender age should be persecuted by the other.

Lady Dean tried to take Bell in hand, and draw the two other young men into conversation, so as to leave the field open for her son. But nothing was of any use ; Daisy was rather shy, Algernon was stupid ; nothing sweet could be said by one in the presence of his rival ; and as for Andrew who was evidently staying in the house, they could scarcely be civil to him. It seemed so hard such an advantage should be his.

He still had the bow of his violin in his hand, and Daisy had her fiddle beside her ; the two stands with music on them were set out in the room. The young people had evidently been practising, and Andrew, who could not get over the recollection of his attitude when Tom first appeared, stood first in one part of the room then in another, softly beating time on his palm with the bow, and looking cross and foolish. He could not get out of the room ; he had to stay with the girls according to his promise.

At last, after a call prolonged in each case on pretence of waiting for Cousin Daisy, the guests all rose to go ; and when this same lady came in about ten minutes after, Andrew was performing a kind of war-dance about the room, brandishing the fiddle, and from time to time drawing from it the most excruciating howls, which alternated between

a squeak like a mouse and the most piteous wails ever heard.

"What a handsome young fellow he is!" was her first thought when she beheld him thus dancing "high and disposedly."

"Oh, Cousin Daisy," he exclaimed, "you should not have been so cruel to me, There! I shall never have the face to enter the Hitchcock doors again. Tommy will *tell*."

"And he couldn't get out of the room, mother," said Daisy.

"What does this mean?" exclaimed Cousin Daisy, in a most indulgent tone.

"Why it means," said Andrew, sitting down—"Oh, how could I do it?")—it means that *Tommy saw me with his own eyes imitating him* before his face! To be sure it was meant to be behind his back, but just as we were in the thick of it he marched in."

"Tom Hitchcock been here?" exclaimed Cousin Daisy.

"Of course he has. You said he would, and I should like to have fled, but I couldn't. Oh, I am covered with infamy!"

Thereupon, with much amplitude, as—"I stood here," and "he got that hassock," and "had been doing nothing but laugh at us, which he always does," the whole scene, with all the previous remarks, was retailed to Cousin Daisy. For a few minutes she said hardly anything, then for once a suspicion came into her mind. Perhaps, was her thought, Tom Hitchcock turned pale not with

anger, because he supposed Andrew was imitating him, but with jealousy, because he supposed him to be a rival. That was a great advance in the sordid spirit of the world for Cousin Daisy.

"Well now, darlings," she presently said, "go and have your tea with Fräulein, and mind you prepare for your French master better than you did last week."

"But we may dine with you, mother, as there'll be no one else but And?"

"Oh, yes," said Mrs. E. Smith, with the least little twist in her lips, with which, when she was slightly embarrassed, she used to keep back a smile.

"*And, indeed / no one else but And !*" However, she said no more ; the girls kissed her and went away. Then, when she had handed some tea to Andrew, and the servants had drawn the curtains and left the room, she said to him—

"You and Fergus have made me feel before this that you know almost more about my dear children than I do !"

"I certainly told Daisy," he began, as if excusing himself, "that she ought not to be so much under the dominion of Bell."

"Yes, she said so."

Then he went on—"She is very tender-hearted, and wants to keep Bell from fretting:" and as Cousin Daisy said nothing, he added, "They certainly did tell us for fun about all their cousins making love to them."

"Yes, and you said I ought to know it. I

thought myself very much obliged to you, And. It had not occurred to me to guard them from their *cousins*."

"Not from their cousins, indeed! And why not?"

"I don't know; I suppose I trusted them. I did not let any other young men or boys have access to them."

"No, I heard that; not if you could help it, at least."

"And even the cousins did not see them very much," continued Cousin Daisy, twinkling away a tear.

"*I wonder what she means by 'very much,'*" thought Andrew. "*Tom Hühcock and all the Hühcocks saw them always when they were in London at least once a week. Aunt Lucia took care of that.*"

"*And I wonder whether he forgets that he is a cousin too,*" thought Mrs. E. Smith, but she said no more, and Andrew presently remarked—

"I am sure Daisy does not care a straw for any of them. And as for that cousin of hers, Captain Dean, I told her when he was gone that I thought he was rather a lout! He looked almost sulky. I am sure you need not be afraid of him."

"Oh, you think not; but he is a fine young fellow."

"Yes, but he came with his *mamma*. If I had not felt so savage myself, I should have been delighted to watch how the old woman flashed her eyes at him to make him *go it*, and then was so

sweet to the others, trying to draw them round herself."

And now, after almost taking counsel with the young cousin, Mrs. E. Smith wondered in her simplicity all the time she was dressing at his penetration and the wisdom of his observations ; and then, behold, they met at dinner, and he was unaccountably young, younger in fact than she remembered to have seen him since he had been a mere boy.

"But then," he replied, when she could not forbear to laugh, and make some observations of this sort—"but then, I am not obliged to be grand here."

"Grand !" she exclaimed.

"Yes, I have to live up to the place somehow if I can, when I am there—and then there's Saunders."

"Your butler, do you mean ?"

"Yes ; what did you think of him ?"

Cousin Daisy was surprised.

"I thought he seemed a very respectable person," she replied.

"Yes, and one could never think of sending him away ; but at first—the first few days at any rate—I used to think I would rather run away and leave him there than have to face him."

"What used he to say to you ?" asked Daisy.

"Why, he is always so horridly respectful ; and then he used to ask me what wines I would please to have up, and I didn't know ; and then he saw that I didn't know ; and then I saw that he saw it—"

"Well?" asked Cousin Daisy, amused.

"Well, then, on a sudden I saw his stout old visage change, as if he was afraid I might be huffy; and so I instantly knew, for the first time, of course, what it is to have a dependent."

"He should have brought you a list of your wines."

"He didn't. He said, 'We've often had young gentlemen here that liked Bass,' and he seemed so much to hope he had said the right thing. I heard afterwards that people had been *nasty* enough to say I was a more awful screw even than old Cousin Capper—they said it ran in the blood. Well, then, the cook, a stout old party, came to the smoking-room door, and actually expected me to order dinner. There I cut up rough. I said I wouldn't; she was to send me up a proper dinner out of her own head."

"I dare say she gave you enough," said Bell.

"She did. I used to think how we five could have enjoyed those dinners if we had set to work on them all together."

"You did not like dining alone then?" asked Daisy.

"No, I didn't. When Saunders and the footman were both waiting, I felt as if the prog would choke me. I was so glad when you invited me to go to Scotland, Cousin Daisy."

IV.

REASONS FOR GRATITUDE.

ANDREW reached home by the last train on Saturday. He had remained as long as possible, for he had been made welcome ; had good accounts from home, and his mother's notes especially made it manifest that she wanted him to stay away as long as he would.

He soon observed that matters were not exactly as he had left them ; for, in the first place, his aunt was much more pleasant, and sympathetic too, in her behavior to his mother than she had been, and then Tom looked pinched and pallid. He was a brave young fellow, and made few complaints ; but it was more evident now, not only that he was an invalid, but that he was to continue one.

Andrew walked home after the morning service and the sermon of the missionary-bishop with his aunt. He remarked that his mother looked pale and seemed low.

"She has seen Tom," said Mrs. Hitchcock.

"She knows, then ?"

"Mr. Wise had not heard that she meant to be pushed on her sofa into his room. I hear he said afterwards that if he had known he should not have prevented it."

"Poor mother!"

"Tom was very much agitated. But she—Tom had been dressed up in that handsome blue dressing-gown that you sent, and he was lifted a little on the thing you sent, so that he was not lying flat—but she, after she had given him one long look, did not want telling anything. She managed to be quite calm. She always had great courage and self-control, but she could not speak. Mr. Wise presently came up rather in a hurry, and Tom seeming faint, he got her moved out of the room, and stayed with the poor fellow.

"I came up to her room a few minutes after. She was trembling and crying, but quite quietly. 'I know it's the spine,' I heard her say. Tom's nurse was supporting her, and she said, instead of answering, 'The Lord comfort you, ma'am.'"

Andrew was rather young, and may have been excused if he was glad and thankful to find that, at any rate, it could not now devolve on him to tell his mother that her fine, clever, and healthy son was never to walk or even stand again.

Tom, Mrs. Hitchcock said, rather went back when he found how shocked his mother was; it seemed to take down his courage and composure; it brought his misfortune more vividly before him.

Antoinette, with little Martin, had joined them, and on hearing this last speech Andrew made an answer which disappointed and vexed both her and her mother to such a degree that they scarcely cared to conceal their feelings.

"I dare say he is often very dull," said Andrew,

"and I've been away for some days ; so, if you'll excuse my absence aunt, at luncheon, I'll have my lunch with him."

This proposition was received by both the ladies in dead silence. It would have been impressive if he had noticed it, but as he did not, it fell flat. And yet, perhaps, Andrew might have been made to see what he had done if footsteps had not been heard following, and little Mrs. Ford, the vicar's wife, had not joined them, slightly out of breath and very much out of countenance. "They were going to entertain the bishop, of course, and his chaplain at their early dinner ; but their dining-room was so very small, and a dear old clergyman had walked in from the town with both his sons ; and—it was a long walk—"

"Oh, do let me turn back with you and beg them to come on to us !" exclaimed Andrew. "And, aunt, will you be so very kind when you get in as to give orders that four or five extra places shall be laid ?"

"You always seem to be having deputations," said Andrew, as they turned back.

"Yes ; and of course we like so far as we can to entertain them."

"Oh, I was not taking the liberty of asking you to send them on to me ; but if you liked, as your dining-room is small, to send two or three of your own boys to me, I should think it very kind and friendly. Would you, for instance, to-day like to keep your old missionary friend, and send us some of your own boys and his too ?"

"Oh, I should !" exclaimed Mrs. Ford.

Andrew came back with five youths, and little Martin at his heels.

There was abundance of tuck, as they would have phrased it, on the table ; and no guest of sufficient consequence to make him feel that he must needs be present. He found Tom in his blue dressing-gown, a white tie, his hair brushed and his room decorated with certain plants in pots, which Callender had sent up from the greenhouses.

"I'm going to have a drawing-room," said Tom. "I always do on a Sunday ; but you don't know of it, because you are at lunch. Those who have been to church have their best clothes on—Callender comes in his shiny black suit, and the cook in her black silk gown ; so that it is a convenient time. I say, And, I've been thinking that in some respects I'm lucky after all—I might be much worse off."

Andrew was sitting by a window. He turned towards Tom quite astonished.

A knock at the door.

"Come in, Mrs. Murphy," said Tom.

In marched the stout cook. She approached the bed, and he shook hands with her.

"And was ut a blanc-mange that ye was asking for, sor, and wanted it ut once? It's meself could have cried, but ye should have known."

"Oh," said Tom, "Mrs. Blount told me afterwards that it could not be made in a hurry."

"Bring ut in, Terence, me son !" she exclaimed, and at the same moment, catching sight of the

young master, she made him a sweeping curtsey, and the footman came in with a tray, and on it one of the biggest shapes of blanc-mange ever seen. "Is ut everything av the best his honor would have me bestow on ye? Sure the crame av ut would stand upright."

"It looks jolly," said the schoolboy.

"And flavored ut I did wid—wid—but I'll say no more."

"For fear of Mrs. Blount?" asked Tom. "And how do I look, do you think? I ought to get fat considering the lots of prog you send me up."

"Ye look an angel in your new dressing-gown—an angel and no less."

"I say," exclaimed Tom, "you don't expect me to eat the whole of this, and all the apricot jam round it as well? It must have taken a good while to make it."

A motherly look came into the cook's face.

"Ah, honey," she said, "it's wishin' I am that the hought av good atein' could bring ye back again as ye was before, an' that's the livin' truth, though there was the squirtin' av me, and the chevyin' av the cats. But there! ye know ut!"

Thereupon the cook departed, and another knock announced Mr. Callender.

Mr. Callender was in a full suit of black, and Mr. Saunders followed close on his heels, the latter having brought up china and glass for the meal. Mr. Callender paid his compliments, and in spite of the presence of the young master, thought it his

duty, especially as it was Sunday, to throw a moral and religious tone over his remarks.

"It's a dispensation, sir, so 'tis ; but you're waited on like a king, and a fat sorrow's better than a lean sorrow, as all the world knows."

"So I was just saying to my brother. How are you, Saunders? I haven't seen you for some days."

"Quite well, sir, at your service."

"I was saying that I might be much worse off."

"Well, yes, Mr. Tom," said Callender, "Why you might be that miss'nary-bishop as we're just heerd ; that gets, as he told us himself, so fried up with the heat, that it dries all the juices of his body, so that I expect his bones rattle. And then the musquitoes and the white ants and the crocidiles. No, sir, you lie as comfortable as can be. No niggers a-nigh *you*. We has all much to be thankful for, specially when the crops are pretty good, and the American blight keeps off the trees."

"Shake hands, Callender," said Tom. There-upon the gardener came close, shook hands with Tom, said "God bless you, sir," and departed.

A plentiful meal being now spread, the two brothers began their luncheon, and Saunders withdrew.

"Yes," observed the schoolboy, "that's exactly what I might be, And, a great deal worse off."

"Well, I won't disagree with him," thought Andrew, "that would be unfeeling, and I won't contradict him either."

He sat silent, and Tom went on—

"Just look at the prog, look at the room ; and

look at all these screw-y things, and padded things, and lamps that twist all sorts of ways, and shades to them, and a music-stand that seems almost alive, it's so handy. I say, did you go down G. Street when you were in London?"

"Yes. It did look shabby,—and small.

"Ah! while you were away I was dull in spite of the things that came down. Antoinette's such a muff of a girl, and I had hardly anything to do; but one morning, when I had been very irritable with old Blount, partly because I'd had a bad night, I fell sound asleep just after breakfast, and dreamt that I was in the old house in Bloomsbury. I thought you and Fergus were carrying me upstairs on my mattress; you bumped me a good deal, and I was in a horrible fright lest you should let me fall. I was got into the little back attic you know that Miles and I have always had. I could not see a thing out of the window but the roofs of those stables, and it all looked dark and dirty. There were the two chairs, and the chest of drawers with some of the handles off, and the looking-glass that we cracked—"

"Well?" asked Andrew, when he paused.

"Well nothing was ever so real. I seemed to be a long time by myself, and then you came in. I said, 'Have I got to be here always?' and you said, 'Of course.' I say, And, only think if this had happened this time last year."

"To be sure," said Andrew, with grave candor; "only think if it had."

"Well, I dreamed that as you sat at the foot of

the bed, you were whistling softly—as you do, you know, when you're thinking—and then you said, 'Oh, Tommy, Tommy! how could you do it?' 'Do what?' I said; I've done nothing.' 'When you never drove so much as a mangy whelp in a cat's-meat cart before,' you went on. You've never said such a thing once to me when I was awake, and you might have done."

"What would have been the use?" said Andrew, rather ruefully; and then added pointedly, "I mean instead to make it as easy for you as I can."

Tom paused and was evidently impressed; he shortly went on, however—

"But if you hadn't said it in the dream, I don't know when I should have been able to get myself awake again. I thought it hard and unfair, and I shouted at you, 'I've done nothing at all; old Phil Capper's not dead, don't flatter yourself; you've got no country house, you've got no horses, and no such things as a dog-cart for me to drive. Shut up!' and I thought you immediately threw open the window, and said, 'I can't stand this, and I won't. There must have been some informality in my head, the Registrar-General must look after it;' and you jumped straight out on to the stable-roofs, and I was so alarmed and astonished that I woke."

Andrew laughed.

"And so you'll make it easy for me!" said Tom. "Why, you do; *but I'm sorry I did it!*" and he sighed.

In the meantime Mrs. Blount was enjoying her-

self downstairs. She always dined with the servants on Sunday morning, and was already intimate with the cook, Mr. Saunders, and Mr. Calender; with the cook especially, who followed the young Squire's directions to the letter in the matter of the invalid's meal. Mr. Wise had said that what chance there was for Tom depended upon his variable appetite being tempted; he must always have what he liked. The cook could never report a conversation without imparting her own brogue to it.

She made Mrs. Blount most welcome to the larder, and wanted her to come down daily and choose what she liked, for, "'Is ut saving I'd be wid such a case in me house?' says the young master. 'Bedad, me desire is that he have everything av the best, and that's the livin' truth.'"

Andrew went soon after this to see his mother. Her eyes filled with tears.

"Tom's better, I know," she said. "He had a better night. I see Mrs. Blount every morning."

"Oh, yes, he's better," said Andrew. "As jolly as possible, and as reasonable too."

"There," she said, putting any discussion off with a gesture of her hand, "it was that woman's face which told me, and your aunt being—being, well, almost kind. But spare me, dear boy, I cannot talk of it. Cousin Daisy seems to have made you very welcome."

"Oh, yes, she always does. She confided to me that she is busy just now driving out every day to see the girls' late governess, that Miss Lancaster

whom she dismissed rather suddenly. She reads with her, and has got her to see a clergyman out there. It seems that she is not likely to live long."

The fact was that Miss Lancaster was now fast failing. She had the comfort of some truly penitent letters from the brother in America, and she wanted for nothing. Daisy was allowed to provide all she could possibly need, though not to go and see her; and when she died peacefully, the two late pupils were among her most sincere mourners, but only one of them knew that she had ever been at all to blame.

"I consider Cousin Daisy a saint," said Andrew. "She cares hardly anything for her fine income, excepting because it enables her to do good."

"How do the girls look?"

"Bell bigger and taller than ever. But Daisy the last three months seems to have toned down. She is better-looking as she grows up, sometimes looks pretty, and really has a fine figure now. They both look much the better for being drilled. Cousin Daisy said *you* put that into her head."

"Yes," said the mother, with real pleasure, "I did. They are sure to improve, and they always had beautiful heads of hair and fine teeth."

"Yes," said Andrew, carelessly, "but Bell is such a *whopper*, and she is so babyish, fretting about everything. Oh, mother, when will the Hitchcocks go?"

That question was soon answered. Mrs. Hitchcock entered, and said coldly :

"I thought you were with Tom, Andrew. Don't let us disturb you."

Andrew had by this time risen, and set chairs by his mother's sofa. Antoinette was behind her mother, and was dressed for afternoon church.

"Not going to church, Andrew!" said Mrs. Hitchcock. "Oh, I thought you always did. Well, dear Mary, I came in to say that now I hope you will be able to do without me." There was an awkward pause; Antoinette was buttoning her gloves. "I promised not to say a word about it till And came home," she continued, graciously.

"Thank you," faltered Mrs. Capper; saying a pretty thing she did not mean was not her *forte*. "You have stayed some time with me, and it would be a shame if I could not get on perfectly well now, Lucia, with Andrew to take such care of me as he does."

So she was not going to be asked to stay, nor was Antoinette either.

"I thought of going up on Tuesday," she said slowly.

"Very well, aunt," said Andrew. "Thank you for having stayed so long."

"I would have managed to leave Antoinette behind," said Mrs. Hitchcock, "as it was such a pleasure to poor Tom to play at those various games with her, but the nurse—" She stopped and changed the form of her sentence.

Mrs. Capper colored, but did not speak, and her sister proceeded :

"If the nurse is still going to stay, I hardly

know—though, poor fellow, I am sorry for him, how I could ask my dear child—”

“Send the nurse away,” exclaimed Andrew, “for the sake of a few games! Why surely, aunt, you must be joking. She is perfectly essential to Tom; to his well-being certainly, and for anything I know, to his life.”

Antoinette had now put the last button into its hole, and she returned the button-hook to her pocket, threw up her graceful head, made a little *reverence* to Andrew, which was almost a curtsy, and walked out of the room.

Mrs. Hitchcock had seen the manner of her daughter's departure. Mrs. Capper had not, and wondered at her son's crestfallen air. He looked rather red in the face, and deeply ashamed of himself. Why?

Well, this was what the thing meant. It accused Andrew—to his own apprehension, and perhaps in her intention—of being so utterly mother-pecked, sat upon, and squashed, that he could not call his very self anything but a self belonging to the dear mamma. He was inwardly enraged, but unluckily the accusation was fully proved, he thought, in her opinion, so long as he was such a coward, that he dared not even amuse himself (*as he would like to do*) with a little innocent flirtation with his own guest, lest his mother should call him to order. Yes, he was a coward.

When Andrew looked up his aunt's eyes were on him, with the least little smile in them. She understood herself to understand the whole thing so

well, but it was not exactly the thing she supposed either.

"I have heard nothing of a tiff between Antoinette and the nurse," said Mrs. Capper anxiously.

"No, dear Mary, and as we go so soon what does it matter. Antoinette, as you must have observed, has such a desire to be useful, dear child; and Tom was so glad of her society. Perhaps the nurse was jealous—I really can't say. For the last three days Antoinette has not been in his room at all—that woman actually locked her out."

Mrs. Hitchcock knew that on the manner this speech was received a great deal depended. She should not give up all hope and go till it was answered. Which would answer? If her sister answered and brought on a discussion, she still might win.

No, she lost! Andrew answered.

"But she locked every one else out too, didn't she, aunt?"

"Very likely, I dare say she may have done," said Mrs. Hitchcock.

She accepted failure, and fully decided to go on Tuesday, and take Antoinette with her. The nurse must have already spoken to him.

"And so you've had a tiff with Miss," said Mr. Callender, for the nurse that afternoon taking her little walk came by the gardener's cottage, and was politely asked in to take a cup of tea.

"Yes, Mr. and Mrs. Callender, and regret it I do not. A nurse, to my notion, should not chance

her patient's getting a bad night, overdoing hisself or herself, as the case may be, because she can't take the liberty of a wink or a sign o' some sort to others in the room. She don't ought to have anybody over her head."

"There you have it, ma'am," said Mr. Callender.

"Well, I made a sign times and again to Miss that was sitting by my patient. Why, she was actually argufying with him, and worretting his nerves into fiddle-strings. She knew what I meant, and 'Oh no,' says she, 'you're not tired, Tom, air you? It interests you to have a little rational talk.' He was getting angry and red in the face by that time. 'Twasn't exactly high church and low they was talking about, nor yet church and dissent. It was a doctrine, ma'am, and she was very hot upon it. At last I said, said I, 'There's a person here that wants to speak to you, Miss, if you please,' and I beckoned her out into the dressing-room. 'Well, nurse?' she says, and I took her through into the corridor. 'Tis I that wants to speak to you, Miss,' says I. 'It'll be hours before I get that poor boy's pulse down, and, if you please, you must leave him for the present time,' and I left her outside and went in again. Well, then, when she was gone down, I locked his room door, and hung a curtain before it. Says I, 'It's cold now, sir.' He was very feverish that night, and next day there was a paper pinned outside, Mr. Saunders writ it out, sayin' the nurse would not have folk knock at that door, but they was to knock gently at the dressing-room door beyond. So when I heard a

knock I went and shut myself into the dressing-room first, and then opened the other door of it into the corridor. She knocked, and I said he was not well enough to see her. It's not religion for to argufy at sick folk."

"And there again you have it, ma'am," said the gardener complacently.

"Mr. Ford *knows his business*," continued the nurse, "and even if he didn't, I would not have it on my conscience that I hindered him in his visits."

This opinion, though strangely expressed, was understood, and had the entire assent of the gardener and his wife.

"But put aside argufying," continued the nurse, "there's many a patient that's very glad for to hear a chapter read, and a prayer too. In short, I see so much o' that, Mr. Callender, and you too, ma'am, that the next morning after I go to a fresh case, I allers say, just as if it was part of the treatment, 'Well now, sir, I've redd you up so well as I can, so I'd better read a few verses, if you please,' and then I have a book our chaplain gev me, with plain, comfortable prayers in it, and some of the church collects printed. So I kneel down afterwards, just as if it was family prayers, and it's very rare indeed but what a patient likes it, and says Amen' after it. Now this one, he's too young and too shy to have thought of asking for such, but I think he feels a comfort in it."

"Do he, ma'am?" said the gardener cordially.

"I'm right glad to hear it. He's a fine young fellow—a hero-ly young fellow."

"Ah," said the nurse, shaking her head, "that poor boy goes through a vast deal more than anybody but me knows of, and he bears it brave."

"Tuesday, oh, joyful day!" exclaimed Andrew, as he was marching about the garden after breakfast on Monday, with his hands in his pockets. "Tuesday they leave this—no, not this *hospitable* roof. What a sneak I feel!—how she twirls her lips about! I can't stand a contemptuous girl; but then I certainly did flirt with her *a little*. How shall I get through the day?"

As he turned, unexpected assistance came to him. Mrs. Ford and the curate—a very tall, handsome young curate—were standing on the doorsteps.

"Well," said Mrs. Ford, as he followed and joined her just as she was being shown into the drawing-room, "well, what am I come for? You'll say, of course, that it's for money as usual. No, it's not money this once."

"You're welcome to whatever it is," said Andrew laughing. To have plenty to give, and never to be asked for more than he could very well spare, was sweet to the young Squire.

"Welcome am I!" she answered, as she took Antoinette by the hand. "Well, then, I want Miss Hitchcock—I want her to help with my little sale. My sale for the schools, you know."

"Oh, yes, I forgot," said Andrew, innocently.

The handsome curate made his bow, and Antoinette blushed beautifully.

Antoinette must really come and help to sell. The neighborhood would come in, and it always made such a difference having a—a girl like Miss Hitchcock to sell.

Antoinette was nothing loth ; the curate's eyes were full of entreaty. When she was gone to dress, Andrew said—

“Mother thinks it a shame that you should have all this trouble. She and I must subscribe, she says.”

“With all my heart,” says Mrs. Ford ; “you shall do that too. But we cannot get on without a fancy sale as well.”

“People nowadays will hardly ever give enough unless there is some kind of equivalent,” observed Mrs. Hitchcock.

“No ; and it is a wasteful thing to have these sales. Some things are spoilt, and a good deal of money is spent on others which will never sell, even at half what they cost.”

“And then there is your fatigue,” said Mrs. Hitchcock, with sympathy.

“Oh, that's nothing, if I have not that to fatigue me, I shall have something else. But now, Mr. Capper, the subscription—what is that going to be ?”

Andrew told her.

‘Ah !’ she answered, “I consider that handsome ; we never need have been in any straits if Mr. Ford had not consented (because two of his

brother clergymen begged him) to join our funds with those of the poor parish in the town ! You will come and look in on us, Mrs. Hitchcock ; and you will come, Mr. Capper, of course ? ”

“ I don’t understand fancy things,” said Andrew. “ Spend two sovereigns for me at your stall.”

“ I shall not,” said Mrs. Ford, “ you must come.”

“ Well, I’ll see about it,” said the young Squire, manifestly not intending to show himself.

“ And it seems you told Callender to send me in some camellias.”

“ Oh, yes, I did, on Saturday. I wrote to him from London to do it when I got your notice of the sale.”

“ They are beautiful ; he has sent in some ferns too ; they will dress up the tables in grand style. What am I to do with them all afterwards ? ”

Andrew not having considered this matter, cogitated for a moment.

“ And the two Miss Delanys are coming also to sell.”

Andrew here sat upright in his lounging chair.

“ Oh, are they ? ” he asked, in what was meant to be a careless tone.

“ I thought of having them all made up into three most beautiful bouquets, and if you were very good, you might present them, as they are your own, to the three young ladies when the sale is over.”

Mrs. Ford had won the day, but there was no occasion for her to say more than, “ I shall have

the bouquets made up ready," as at that moment Antoinette came in, looking precisely the sort of young lady to be persuasive at a sale. Mrs. Ford bore her away triumphantly; the curate followed, he was very well off. He decided to be liberal that day, and if he meant his money to go chiefly at Antoinette's stall, this was precisely what had been intended.

Andrew, with his hands behind his head, in the lounging chair, was somewhat idly looking after them, when Mrs. Hitchcock rather deeply sighed.

"Aunt," said Andrew, "you said you should like some of those little seedling-ferns from the greenhouse. Shall Callender put them up for you?"

Then Mrs. Hitchcock sighed again, and appearing to call her attention back to the present scene, said—

"What did you say, my dear?"

Andrew was so glad Mrs. Ford had taken off Antoinette. He lifted himself up and repeated his question.

"Ah! was it that? yes, thank you. And, I should." Then came another sigh. "The fact is, I was thinking of my boy—of Tom, you know."

"Oh!" said Andrew, not helping her in the least.

"I suppose you know something about it, And." Andrew sat bolt upright and looked surprised, but said nothing. "Did you see him when you were in London, poor fellow?"

"Oh, yes, I did;" said the young Squire. "I did."

He looked decidedly out of countenance. A scene in which his own knees, a soft hassock, and a very hard-featured old footman bore a part, flashed back on his memory. He wondered whether Tom had written to his mother, and complained that Andrew was trying to supplant him.

"That careless girl," continued Mrs. Hitchcock, —here another telling sigh—"has (she might at least behave with more feeling) has much to answer for."

Here Andrew's genuine astonishment got the better of his discomfiture.

"Daisy!" he exclaimed, "do you mean Daisy?"

"Why, you must be aware, I think, how deeply he has long been attached to her. I can hardly think she never mentioned it to you."

"Oh, well," said Andrew, "she and Bell certainly did say to Fergus and to me (They are so very young, so childlike, that they might well be excused)—"

"Say what?" exclaimed Mrs. Hitchcock;

"Why, that he made love to them; and we said—"

"Yes, what did you say?"

"Aunt, we said their mother ought to be told, and they promised us they would tell her."

"*They—their* mother; what has it to do with Bell? she is almost a child. Tom's attachment has nothing to do with her."

"Oh yes; but they did not only tell us about Tom. Aunt, isn't it much better that I should tell you the real truth?"

Mrs. Hitchcock's hand trembled, and she colored, even painfully.

"What is it, then?"

"Why, that they said both the Mitfords and Algy Dean, and Tom had made them offers, and seemed very much devoted to them."

Mrs. Hitchcock was so much distressed that she could not say a word.

"As to being *careless*," Andrew went on, impelled to take Daisy's part; "if she thinks it is because of her large fortune that they make love to her, perhaps she may be forgiven *for that*."

"It had nothing to do with it," exclaimed Tom's mother.

"But she can't marry them all."

"It is very unkind of you, Andrew, to class Tom with all the rest."

"But, aunt, Cousin Daisy knows *now*. If Tom did not think Daisy far too young to have regular addresses paid to her, why did he not tell her mother himself that he loved her? and if he wanted to make her attached to him before her mother knew, and if he calculated on Cousin Daisy's love for her, and also on her unworldly spirit, to allow her to marry him, it was not—it certainly was not fair."

"You lay down the law against my boy Tom with great vigor," said the mother. "I might answer that a young man deeply in love is not

very likely to be prudent, or, as you call it, fair."

"Well, aunt," said Andrew more humbly, "it certainly is no business of mine—but what a clever fellow Tom is! There is the great examination coming on for the 'Indian Civil.' If he could throw this—well, this ambition aside, and give his whole mind to it."

"You think Daisy does not return his attachment?"

"I am sure she does not care for any of them, and Cousin Daisy would not hear of such a thing."

"I don't think much of her!" exclaimed Mrs. Hitchcock.

"No, she does not observe things; and for the mother of an heiress not to observe things is certainly a defect. But her daughters do think much of her, particularly Daisy."

"You appear to me to be going out of your way to assure me that you know Tom has no chance."

"If I think so, as I do——"

"You even want me to tell him so, poor fellow."

"Yes, I think it would be just as well; but aunt, I particularly hope you will tell him at the same time that I am not his rival—not one of his rivals, I mean."

"Very well," said Mrs. Hitchcock, coldly.

She trembled a little and wiped away two or three tears. Antoinette had been right, Andrew did know.

Andrew again showed a certain desire to take the part of the two young heiresses.

"Bell is a babyish thing in spite of her being so tall."

"I have already said," exclaimed Mrs. Hitchcock, rather bitterly, "that this has nothing whatever to do with Bell."

"Oh, hasn't it?" said Andrew slowly, and as if in thought.

Mrs. Hitchcock felt very angry indeed, and the more so when he added in his most dispassionate tone—

"Well, of course I knew they all made Daisy their chief object, she is almost grown up. She has five times as—no, I mean, that to do her justice, she is a five times sweeter girl."

V.

A FANCY SALE.

OFF—actually off!” exclaimed Andrew, as the train steamed out of the station.

It was a very frosty morning ; he stamped about, he all but danced ; there was nobody to look excepting one porter, and his back was turned.

“I hardly deserve it, though, and that’s a fact, for I—did—flirt—with her—a—*little*.” Andrew then walked home, and second thoughts came to him. “Flirt did I ? yes, but she was brought here that I might do it, and Aunt Hitchcock knows very well that I know it.”

“Well, mother !” he exclaimed, coming into her dressing-room and answering his mother’s eyes, “yes, it’s all right.”

“Then I don’t understand the meaning of that most beautiful bouquet,” said Mrs. Capper. “Those flowers came out of your house.”

“Oh, yes ; they did.”

“And you gave it to her ?”

“Well, I did, and I didn’t,” said Andrew. “I sent enough flowers to make three splendid bouquets ; you’ll be surprised to hear, mother, that I

have developed a great friendship for Cowper—he's a fine fellow."

His mother looked quite vexed.

"What has he to do with the flowers out of your greenhouse? Antoinette had that bouquet in her hand when she came in to take leave of me, and did not tell me who gave it to her. It was carefully protected with tissue-paper."

"Yes; well, mother, hear the narrative. I sent flowers to Mrs. Ford. Mrs. Ford wanted me to come and buy at her sale—I almost said I wouldn't. I like her, for though she treats me as if I was a schoolboy, whom she had known since before I began to wear knickerbockers, she always supposes that I shall like to do what is the proper thing for a fellow to do who's in my position."

"Then I like her too!" quoth the mother; "but the white camellias?"

"Ah! Well, she said the two Delany girls were coming also to sell; and that she should have my flowers made up into three most beautiful bouquets, and *if I would come and buy* I should give them, as they were mine, to the three young ladies. I was to spend about three guineas—and then I should have them."

"Ah," interrupted Mrs. Capper, "I see, my boy."

"No, you don't mother," said Andrew, "not in the least."

"Then," answered Mrs. Capper, "you are going to let me see."

Andrew laughed.

"You don't know what fun we had out of those bouquets. I was taken up to a small table where they all stood—they were grand, and I, having sharp ears heard, people talk. Some wanted to buy them. 'No,' Mrs. Ford said ; then I heard it whispered about that young Capper had not only given them, but had then given a guinea apiece for the pleasure of being allowed to present them to the three charming girls who were selling.

"Cowper was hanging about Antoinette's stall the whole afternoon."

"Indeed !" exclaimed Mrs. Capper.

"Yes, indeed, mamma. Green was not so much the color of his jealousy as red ; but if ever a fellow looked jealous and miserable whenever he caught my eye, it was Cowper. He was devoted to that degree that Aunt Hitchcock could not conceal her surprise, but went and walked away from them just as she used to do here, when she thought there was any chance."

"Oh !" said Mrs. Capper.

"Well, we certainly had a good deal of fun."

"We?"

"Yes, the two Delany girls and I ; I bought about three guineas' worth of things, almost all at their stall. There were tambourines and ginger-colored art-pots—and flabby art muslins. Aprons, antimacassars, picture-books, shawls, and other æsthetic *truck*. I hate all that art stuff. The Delany girls made me buy all sorts of things that nobody else would have. They said that was what Mrs. Ford got me for ; but I was even with them,

for as soon as I had paid, and the things were heaped all over me, I got a round table cleared in the corner of the room, set it out with my goods, and had a sale of them by auction over again on my own hook. I made Martin blow a penny trumpet. There was rather a hubbub, of course. The thing was unexpected, and Mrs. Ford seemed to think it was frivolous."

"And the Archdeacon?"

"He went into the tea-room. Well, I sold the whole of it—excepting a large pair of goloshes which nobody would have at any price (though Pamela Delany tied them up with pink ribbon), and a hearth-brush. I got fifteen shillings; I said it was salvage stock, which must be cleared out at any sacrifice, and they all came round, and some of the old dowagers bid with hearty good-will—and got the things for what they chose to give. The pots went at threepence each, and so on.

"Well, mother, while I was sitting by my table, sweeping up the silver I'd got, and counting it into Pamela's hand, who was standing before me, I saw a peculiar blue ring on her finger. Did you know she was engaged?"

"No, certainly not."

"Well, the Delanys said as the things at first came from their stall, they ought to have the money for this second sale. I said they should—and Pamela held out her hand. So I looked hard at it and whispered, 'Why isn't he here?' To my surprise she didn't even pretend to misunderstand: she laughed and answered, 'Because he's at St.

Petersburg.' 'A Cossack!' I exclaimed; 'how interesting. No doubt you have his photo here?' Some people parted us then, but in two or three minutes (what a different sort of a girl she is from Antoinette!) she came up, took a tiny sort of book, fastened with a pencil, out of her pocket. 'There,' she said, 'doesn't he look a good fellow?' So she opened it, and I said, 'Why, I hoped he was a wild Cossack, and he's a tame parson.'

"'Of course,' she answered; 'isn't my father Archdeacon? and when do I ever see any man but a parson?'"

"'Oh, I suppose you mean that I'm a boy,' I said; then she was very nice to me, and seemed to wish to let me know that it was much the contrary. 'At the same time,' she went on, 'I've been engaged two years.' I inquired when it was to be. 'Oh, next spring,' she said. 'Then,' I replied, 'I shall have the pleasure of presenting you with this towards your furnishing,' and I handed her the hearth-brush. She managed to hide it; but I was even with her. I came out afterward, to hand her and her sister into the carriage with the Venerable and Mrs. Venerable, and I openly put in the hearth-brush on her knee, and then I handed in the goloshes, and said I hoped there was a chance that they might fit *him*.

"However I must go back to Antoinette. I looked round the corner now and then, and saw what was going on; and Mrs. Ford, of course, saw it too; she was seldom in a place where she could see me and the Delanys. Really, Cowper made

himself quite conspicuous ; and Antoinette looked pleased and very shy.

"As for Mrs. Ford, she was so struck that I ventured to beckon her out into the hall, and I said to her something of the sort that as she always treated me like a school-boy, I was going to use school-boy language to her and say, '*You and I are mates.*' She said, when she saw that I was in excellent spirits, 'I don't know what you mean, you queer young fellow ; but if I thought I had helped to upset any hope of yours, I could cry about it this minute.' So I said, 'What I truly want is that Cowper should have the third bouquet, and that you should let me manage it. I'm not blighted, don't be afraid.' She nodded, for she understood."

"Dear me, this becomes very interesting," said Mrs. Capper ; "I want the rest of it."

"Ah, the rest of it. Very soon I was in the dingy little hole that old Ford calls his study ; Mrs. Ford told Cowper that some one there wanted to speak to him for one minute. And oh ! his face when he marched in and saw who it was. The lamp was lighted ; I called out, 'Now, Mr. Cowper, we have no time for making any mistakes,' and I could not help laughing. You should have seen how pale he turned. He thought, I suppose, that Antoinette had been *firting* with him. But I soon managed to let him know that I was shortly to give two of those bouquets he knew of to the two girls who had been selling with me, and if there was any one whatever to whom he would like to give the

other, I hoped he would accept it. Well, that fellow was actually obliged to sit down for a minute, and then he didn't like me to go till I had shaken hands with him. Ugh! to think of any man being so much in love all on a sudden."

"Well?"

"Oh, well, I came back and told the Delanys what I'd done. 'Oh,' said Bertha, 'if we could but make him go down on one knee to do it, what a tableau it would be!' But I was deeply obliged to Cowper, you know, mother."

"Certainly, my son!"

"I said, 'If I did it nothing is more likely than that, not to be outdone, he would bend his knee too. 'Oh do, then,' they both said. 'No,' I said, 'I may have—in spite of the disobliging way in which you are always making out that I'm young—I may have very bitter memories connected with my knees, one or even both; such memories, in short, as *the Cossack* had before you accepted him, two years ago, Miss Pamela Delany—at a time when you plainly hint that I was not old enough to make an offer.'"

"How could you talk such stuff, dear boy?"

"Well, Miss Pamela laughed; but she said, 'I don't know why I should come in for all this chaff—more than Bertie,' so then I found out that she was engaged too!"

Mrs. Capper was just a little sorry.

"And the rest of it?" she asked.

"Oh, well, that part fell rather flat. I presented my two bouquets to the two girls, Mrs. Ford bringing

them up on purpose. Cowper, of course, presented his to Antoinette. And, mother, I think it's *a case*, I do indeed. He met us this morning at the station."

Mrs. Capper's countenance expressed a kind of fervor which was almost devout.

"And he said in a blundering kind of way that he had to go up to the Junction, which, in fact, is within ten miles of London. Aunt Hitchcock was very gracious, and I helped her ; I had found an empty carriage. I proposed that Cowper should escort them, and they all set out together."

"Now is this, or is it not, more than you deserved?" said Mrs. Capper with an indulgent smile.

"Aunt Hitchcock should not have done it then," said Andrew evasively.

"Which means that you did now and then flirt with Antoinette a little?"

"Yes, I suppose so."

And now the Christmass holidays having commenced, and Master Miles Capper showing himself in his brother's house, also in his stables, cow-sheds, and the tops of his trees, together with other places that boys affect, the Squire was again treated as very young, but he did not notice it, so that was of no consequence.

"As I was saying to Mr. Callender, sir," quoth the butler, "grown he is, Master Miles, to that degree, you'd hardly know him ; but two contingencies are enough in one house, and I hope and pray that we may have no more."

"Now what does he mean?" thought Andrew, perceiving that Saunders, as he thought, was performing a sacred duty; but not knowing what it was. The butler continued—

"To avoid another contingency is what, sir, is what you'd wish, I'll be bound, and if you'd let Master Miles have reg'lar riding and driving lessons" ("*catastrophe*," thought Andrew—"yes, that's it")—but Saunders confused him by going on—"for horses and pigs are not all. When you consider the cow, sir, he really didn't ought to have done it, nor a good many other things that he and Mr. Tom did. But I did not see him ride the cow, sir. It was cook and Callender that saw it."

Thereupon Saunders having excited Andrew's surprise went away. "Why yes, sir," said Callender afterwards, "me and Mr. Saunders did take the liberty to pass a remark to 'em now and again. For you see, sir, they're daring, hero-ly young fellows, and there's nothing they don't think they can stick on the back of. Now, there never was an innorcenter-looking little'un than Master Martin; but if he thinks there's no bough that won't bear his weight, nor any ice, however powerful-thin it may be, that'll crack with him, and that if he pulls his pony's tail it won't kick him—why, he'll have to be taught different."

"Yes, with a stick!" exclaimed Andrew; "we must have no more getting into danger."

"As to the cow, it was Mr. Tom who did that."

"Ah, well, I can't find fault with him, poor fellow; he'll never be too daring again."

"It was the day as you and Mr. Fergus went away, sir. I remember as well as can be you turning round in the dog-cart after you'd took leave of them. 'Now don't get into mischief, you fellows,' you shouted out. 'Oh no,' says Mr. Tom, just as if they wasn't all of them everlastingly in mischief. 'I wish we may see Master Miles safe at school again,' says Mr. Saunders. 'It seems a pity his ma had him home just because Mr. Fergus was to be so long away, that he might leave-take of him and the Squire.' 'Oh no,' says Mr. Tom. You were driving through the little field, and they had all runned out to see the last of you. When you was gone that new dairymaid was just bringing up the cows to be milked, and the red 'un she came first with the bell, and Mr. Tom, before she knew anything of it, gave a spring from the fence and landed himself on her back. The others they shrieked and laughed, and there was a fine commotion. The cow backed and kicked and shook herself, and she tried no end to get him off. He held by her horns, and wanted as it were to steer her by them. But when she found it was no use, she set off tearing round the field like mad, the bell going and she prancing. Whether she went round twice or more I don't know, but the other cows were in a great state, and so were the cook and Terrence and me. He got off at last of his own free-will; but the cow has been no good since. She wouldn't give her milk, and in a day or two she went dry."

How Andrew got his brother through the Christ-

mas holidays was perhaps of more consequence to his mother, his old retainer, and himself, than it is to you, my reader. Suffice it to say that Miles went through a vast deal of teaching, partly from Andrew himself, and partly from a riding-master, which took up a good many of his spare hours, and then he was expected to help in amusing Tom, which was also a wholesome occupation for him.

As for Martin, he only got himself once stuck fast on the top of a tree, and had to be got down again by the footman, who being very tall managed to reach the child's foot and get hold of it. It was a nervous business for both, as well as for the young Squire and the cook, who hearing of the affair ran out, her hands all plastered with flour.

Her lamentations over "Terrence, me son, me only joy" were loud and sonorous. Martin made his lamentations afterward, when he had been got safely down from the young tree, which had creaked and bent portentously ; they also were wholesome, and it may be hoped salutary. Soon after this he was taken off to school, Mrs. Callender having made him previously a dripping-cake stuck full of raisins, which he and Danny Callender devoured together. The world and life were opening upon him, and he was so excited and astonished that he did not shed one tear. What with all his new clothes, his large cake, the quantity of money as it seemed to himself that he had got, his mother's kisses and Andrew's exhortations, he hardly knew where he was and what it all meant.

It was Danny Callender who did the crying for

both. He crept into the tool-house and wept as if his heart would break. Andrew chancing to pass some time after, seeing the child's distress and knowing the cause, gave him a shilling. Danny made his bow, and his grandfather, who had seen the transaction, presently asked him about it ; whereupon Danny produced the shilling and said—

“ You better take and lay it by, grand'ther. I've got no'but the dogs to play with now, and I don't care for nowt no more.”

But before this Andrew had made up his mind that he must not leave home ; and no letters from Fergus had cost him such an anguish of desire as the first. Letters concerning Egypt, the Pyramids, the Sphinx, the first cataract, were so very like a book, only perhaps not so good, that he could bear them very well ; but a week before Christmas came a letter of more decisive kind. Fergus had “ done ” Egypt as much as he wanted to do it ; had got back to Cairo ; and, as it was not the right time of year now for them to go to India together, for they ought to start for that tour in November, would Andrew wait till the next November, and meet Fergus then at Suez ? or would he come at once, that they might go somewhere else ? If that could not be, might Fergus go on alone and spend the time between this and then on the east coast of Africa. He wanted to see Zanzibar, go as far as he could into the interior, see wild elephants, rhinoceroses, perhaps a lion or two, and certainly alligators.

This sort of thing did not at all fascinate Andrew. He would not give up India. He telegraphed that

Fergus might have all the time between that and November to do as he liked, but he was to meet him at the time and place specified without fail.

Tom was deeply delighted when it appeared that Andrew would stay behind ; he and his brother concocted the telegram between them.

By this time Mrs. Capper had begun slowly and cautiously to walk about the house again, while Tom slightly improved. By the middle of March he could be got out of his bed daily, and sit in a new-fashioned wheel chair ; he could even move himself in it slightly with his hands. By the middle of April he was, as his nurse thought, nearly as well as he was ever likely to be ; but he was not told this, and it was decided that his mother should move at once into the Dower House, because there he could have a pleasant room to sleep in on the ground floor. All the sitting-rooms were on the same level, and when a door or two had been broken in the walls, and an incline had been made on which his chair could move, he would have access to all the sitting-rooms and to the garden.

It was well that there was plenty to do, for the letters of Fergus, which had been thought of as likely to help in passing the time for Tom, were unaccountably long in making their appearance. As soon as possible after getting the telegram, he wrote to Andrew that he had joined two naval men and two Indian officers, one of whom had his son with him, a lad of nineteen, this last rather delicate-looking but wiry, and with no end of pluck. They were going to shoot, and Fergus

wrote with enthusiasm of the skins, the heads, the horns he hoped to bring back with him. He added that as he was now of age (this was a very few days after that event took place) he should begin to spend some of his own £800. He begged that a sum he named might be telegraphed out to him, and this, added to what Andrew had given him, would provide funds for all he wanted to do during the time he was to be away.

It made his mother's heart ache to read this, but it was not her nature to brood over things. She had given her consent, so she let the matter rest.

Fergus was to sail in a very few days for Zanzibar, from whence they were to sail towards the north, somewhat further than Mombasa. But nothing was heard from Zanzibar; and if Mrs. Capper had not been a model mother—in the opinion of her sons—she would have endured a good deal of tormenting anxiety about him. As it was she always seemed by nature to suppose that “no news was good news.”

“Naughty boy,” she said two or three times, with an indulgent smile, “if he has gone into the interior he should have had letters ready written, so that he could take advantage of any opportunity to get them to the coast.”

“Yes, mother,” Andrew would reply with equal composure. Still they should at least have heard from Zanzibar, and he thought the matter much more odd than she did.

The first letter that appeared was addressed to Tom, and began thus—

"T. CAPPER, DEAR SIR,

"I hope A. got my last two letters all right. We are about sixty miles, I should think, perhaps more, up the Tana river, on our way to the mountains.

"None of your trumpery Snowdon things. This is 18,000 feet high. We think we shall get within thirty or forty miles of the slope up the river. The missionaries, as I told you fellows, helped us to buy and hire boats, dug-outs, and canoes. Of course going up is slowest work, but we can come down, probably, in fine style.

"How they propel them is thus. A man sits in the stern and steers, and works the canoe on, keeping very near the bank or the edge, because another man stands in the bows and punts. The Tana's too deep for an ordinary pole, so he sticks his pole in the bank.—Oh, I don't seem to get on with this, though I've written nearly a page. I wish you could see the things!

"Jock and I are great chums, and have very good fun; but the Major, who is a very good old boy, is unluckily rather nervous about him. He has only one other son, who is at school.

"I told you we have more than a hundred porters, niggers who came from Zanzibar. They carry some of our baggage and food and 'trade'—that's the calico and beads and things to propitiate chiefs with. Most of the guns are in the boats. It saves a vast deal of time going by water. We can fish and shoot—particularly birds.

"The Captain—Cap. I'll call him to save space—

is a very good shot ; Major awfully good—he is the head of the whole concern. The two naval officers spend their time mainly over butterflies and drying plants (ugh !). Dodd and Smile are their names.

“ It is delightful to sit in the dug-outs under the forest trees. Sometimes they are so thick overhead that it is like going through a tunnel. I seem to be telling you this wrong end upwards. Of course, as I said, the disadvantage of this river is the swamps. But we have a head man who governs the porters. They have to go round the swamps, and then when the river runs out into open country they come down to it and meet us and make a camp, we having been perhaps there a couple of days. It costs a good deal ! But this is life. I shall have had this even if I do have to spend the rest of my days sitting on a high stool in some office.

“ However, I must get on. The alligators are all I could wish—Jock and I. There are so many of them, and they are so huge, and they’re such *beasts*. Sneaky wretches, such diabolical cunning in their eyes ! As the boats come on, and they were sitting up with inane stupidity, they gently sink under the water without making even a ripple, and if we make a halt and they are obliged to come up to breathe, they push up their wide jaws and hiss with all their might. Not at us ; Jock discovered that it was only because they were out of breath ; but when there are ten or fifteen at it at

once, the loudest hissing we can make is nothing to it.

“Those two, Cap. and Major, are splendid shots ; Jock is not bad, and I manage tolerably—the things are so big. Oh, Tommy, when the river is wide, it’s a sort of awful joy to see the great creatures come down to drink in the dead of the night when the moon gets low. I can’t help trembling with a sort of terrible delight. We saw two elephants night before last, and an elephant calf. They seemed fond of the little creature, which was not much bigger than a very stout bullock. They caressed it with their trunks, and threw the water over it and themselves. Cap. and Major were not in our punt ; I pricked Jock to wake him, but we had no loaded rifles close to us. Oh, how we groaned, for they were not thirty yards off. Well, we soon heard Cap. and M. go at them, and off they tore ; the cow was hit. Cap. and Major always seem to manage that we shall have no means of shooting in the nights. We went ashore and into the bush with them as soon as day dawned—and some gun-bearers. We tracked the beast for I should think four miles in the bush. I was never so happy in my life nor so frightened. The black fellows followed with almost ‘no dings on.’ It was piping hot, when all in a moment a black thing that seemed as big as a hut got up and made for us. It was the wounded elephant. She was flourishing her trunk and raging toward us, but she was a good mark, you know, and Cap. and Major both hit her—in fact we all four did, but

then we hit the poor beast where we could get at her, and only hurt her, I suppose, but not mortally. Cap. when she appeared, instantly ran off to the left that he might aim in the right place, and down she came. We know an elephant is big, but when I saw this one come down, and crack the young trees and shake the ground, a sort of ecstasy got hold of me, and a kind of fear that I never felt before. They wouldn't let us go right up to her for a little while lest she should get up again. It's tiresome their looking after us so ; but Jock, who is two years younger than I am, is certainly rather too plucky.

("Such a mountain of flesh she was—the whole camp fed on her for three days.) When they did let us crash up through the low bush and *touch her*, oh, how strange it seemed ! we two between us could not lift one of her feet more than a very little.

"You can't think how queer it all is : the smell of the wild creatures ; the smell of our fellow-creatures ; the noise they make in the night, all of them—dancing, singing, howling, drumming, till almost dawn. Then the hyenas, their yowls ; and we've heard now the truly impressive noise of all noises, when it's near, and it seems so very awfully near even when it isn't ; something like a deep evil moan, diversified with a grunt, which means a lion.

"Ha ! that's a thing to hear. As for smells, oh, my poor untravelled ones, you never smelt anything more portentous than the dens in the Zoo—

those are frequently cleaned out. There are something like smells here. I've written this by bits.

"We left the coast last Wednesday week, and it seems some months ago. Jock and I the first day shot three Kudu antelopes, almost as big as red deer, but there's no danger in it. We kept their heads in our own particular dug-out, which follows our canoe, but the whiff that pursued us induced us to merge them in the common stock of booty, and they're cleaned now.

"An ant-hill did I hear you name? Yes, sir, we fired into one yesterday, when the old 'uns were away stalking some wart-hog. We fired rather nearer perhaps than was totally safe. The hill was more like a cockney kind of castle at a tea-garden than anything else; about twenty feet high, and with numerous turrets. The wretches are extremely large, and can bite like anything. We let fly three or four times, and laid bare extraordinary cavities, from which came rolling forth thousands of blind, helpless white maggots. Nobody else seemed to take any notice, but all in an instant we found the critters who owned the castle were almost all over us, and tearing up in thick streams on the top of one another.

"Did we run for it? I believe you, sir. We threw our caps away into the bush, and shook the ants out of our hair and out of our tunics and knickerbockers and boots as well as we could. They had their revenge.

"Cap. and Major coming though their territories afterwards got punctured a good deal, and when

they found what we'd done, Cap. was rather savage. The two naval men, as I told you, sit mildly by, sticking their dead butterflies and bugs on pins ; but on this occasion Dodd said in his high, squeaky voice, 'If I were you, Capper, I should apologize. You've no right to lead that boy into mischief.'

"I merely looked at Major, and he knew what I meant. He actually began to take my part, and those four had a regular blow up with one another. You see they dare not have Jock with them ; and as he is a jolly dog, on the whole I have very good fun with him, though there are certain things that he is on his honor not to do. They are delighted that we should be together, and though it ties me to the rules about him, I suppose I do not shoot well enough yet to go out with safety after buffalo, or even wart-hogs.

"We two shoot for practice at a mark daily when the old ones are some miles off, and we shall not disturb their game. Major and Cap. always declare that they take no life wantonly only for food meat. The whole camp is fed on it, and that makes the stores we brought up last on.

"I hope you're better, old boy. Love to mother and all. Your affectionate brother, F. C."

Tom was pleased with this letter, and on the whole was wonderfully patient and cheerful ; but time went on, and he did not improve beyond the point reached when he first sat up and could join the family party in his wheeling-chair.

In the meantime Andrew taught him how to

keep real accounts, so that he would be able to manage his mother's affairs for her when both her elder sons were disporting themselves abroad. He also arranged to take Mrs. Blount away from the Institution where she had been taught, and keep her (who was nothing loth) for Tom. In order to do this he had to make a handsome present to the Institution ; and he found that Tom's illness, with chairs, sofas, a pony carriage, and various other comforts, had cost so much that, together with the expense of moving his mother to the Dower House and the various things which had to be done to it, his income for the first year, handsome as it was, only just met his expenses.

"And I meant to be philanthropical," he remarked to Cousin Daisy, "and I can't do it."

"Oh, you wanted, as my girls say, to be high-minded, and you don't see that you have anything to be high-minded with."

"So," Andrew went on in a slightly disconsolate tone, "perhaps it may be just as well that I did not go abroad, spend a quantity of money on my travels, and come home to find there was all this to be paid beside. I thought I was so rich this time last year, but I find that whatever the income is there turn up all sorts of things that ought to be done with it."

"Yes," said Cousin Daisy gently, "no doubt, if a man will do them."

VI.

A COMPLIMENT PAID.

Now as the young Squire when he went to London always took up his abode at Mrs. E. Smith's house, it was not strange that his mother should ask her cousin to come and stay at the Dower House for a little while after the London season, before she went to her house—or rather Daisy's house—in Scotland.

Miles and Martin, who had just come home for the midsummer holidays, were packed off every evening to sleep at their brother's house, which was not half a quarter of a mile off, while Andrew generally came over with them to breakfast at his mother's. Thus the Dower House accommodated these visitors and their maids very well; and the Cappers being essentially gregarious, were almost always all together in one house or the other, Tom included—to the great advantage of the two girls, who never enjoyed themselves so much as with these cousins, and frequently said so.


Bell was very much overgrown, and more tearful than ever; but Daisy was a fine, artless, and joyous young creature, and she and Andrew, whether they rode, drove, or walked, were very much together.

Quite a new alarm came into Mrs. Capper's mind. Her eldest son was actually elevating his mother. He had shown himself so loving to her, so unselfish in his consent to stay with her and help her with Tom, so unconscious in the way he took for granted that if her income would not pay for all it was well she should have for Tom, and for her other son's schooling, it should come out of his.

She longed that he should be happy, and if he married young, and as it were under her auspices, she felt that she should not lose him so much as if he brought home a stranger. It would be a fine thing for him, no doubt, if he could match himself with this young heiress ; but she now thought she saw that he was a good deal more attracted to Daisy than she was towards him. On his part there was a decided wish to be with her, but there was nothing on Daisy's but a frank, almost child-like pleasure in him and his opinions—which he shared with Tom, who was a great favorite.

In a very short time Daisy was to be "out," and then Andrew would have to take his chance among several others ; she was sure to have many lovers.

Cousin Daisy showed no consciousness of anything but intimacy on Andrew's part—perhaps there was nothing to be conscious of ; but there was a good deal of frank discourse and laughter among them all, and Mrs. Capper heard for the first time of Tom Hitchcock's devotion, and was made welcome to the anecdote of her son's being found on his knees when Tom marched into the



room. Cousin Daisy, as was evident, set Tom at naught—or rather she thought of him, it was manifest, “as one of the cousins.”

Mrs. Capper turned it all over in her mind, and when all the young people were gone out together, Tom in his pony chair being with them, she spoke.

How anxious she had been to have Daisy. She had not schemed for her as her sister had done ;—now she began to fear least the artless young creature should steal her boy’s heart, and then be snatched away by some one more desirable.

“Daisy,” she said, “I love my eldest son more than anything that breathes—and as for you——”

Cousin Daisy looked up composedly.

Mrs. Capper went on : “He and your child are a good deal together.”

“Yes,” said Mrs. E. Smith, with a twitch of her lips that was scarcely a smile ; and then she went on very slowly, “Don’t you think we had better—let—them—alone ?”

“Do you really mean that you should *like it* ?” faltered Mrs. Capper, a vivid blush mounting in her cheeks.

Cousin Daisy said nothing ; she laid her work down in her lap, and thought, till that blush had faded again. Then she remarked slowly—

“Mary, I am so afraid my child should be married merely for her money. I want her to be loved.”

“Yes,” said the other, with something like genuine sympathy.

"You will not mention this, ever—to any one?"

"No, I will not."

"I have such a high opinion of And that I feel sure he will not propose to her unless he does love her."

Mrs. Capper was silent in her turn; she could not possibly tell Daisy's mother how well she knew the truth of what had been just said; but she was deeply gratified. The mother went on—

"She is seventeen and a half now, you know; and there is our neighbor in the north."

"The Earl do you mean?"

"Yes; he makes it manifest to me from time to time that he wants her for his third son."

"And I have heard you speak of more than one other alliance."

"Yes; but I set my face against the highest of them—I do not like the family—and if my child entered it, I should see but little of her. But," she went on, "you are all fond of my Daisy. Those boys of yours all treat her as if she was a favorite sister."

"I have always been fond of her," said Mrs. Capper, as calmly as she could, "but I supposed, naturally, that she was out of my boy's reach."

Anything like fervor or effusiveness would, she felt, be out of place. Moreover she knew perfectly that Andrew must absolutely be let alone. She had fully put this very thing before him a year ago, and it had been a complete failure.

Hope did not grow at all in her mind as the days went on. The plain-spoken intimacy of a

brother, and a certain partiality for Daisy over Bell was what there was to be seen, so Mrs. Capper saw it. Andrew naturally liked to practice best with Daisy, for she played far better than her sister.

Once he said to his mother—"Daisy looked quite pretty to-day." At another time he remarked—"She certainly plays beautifully."

Mrs. Capper had the good taste not to appear to notice anything he said, and she never even mentioned the subject again to her guest.

In the meantime the girls, especially Bell, underwent a certain amount of criticism, and were occasionally laughed at by the young Cappers, in a fashion never by any chance used toward them by other young people.

Their mother always seemed on these occasions very desirous not to interfere.

"It seems to me that you and Bell are not so high-minded as you were," said Andrew one morning at breakfast.

"Oh, yes, we are," answered Daisy, "at least I am; only sometimes my *things* come to smash. I can't always do my philanthropy properly—but I am philanthropic just the same."

"I'm not," said Bell; "Algernon has been talking about that to me. You see, when the first Christians were commanded to be so kind to the poor, and all that sort of thing, there were no poor-laws, nor hospitals and convalescent homes."

"Well," said Daisy, with a certain artlessness,

I wondered what you and he were talking about so long that day in the window. He was very serious. It was the poor-law, then?"

Miles here withdrew, this talk was not interesting to him.

"Yes," said Bell; "and then the payment for schools, and the churches, that the law demands of lairds in Scotland, make it ridiculous that we should think we ought to give so much away besides."

"Only think," said Andrew; "why I considered Algernon Dean rather a *muff*. To think of his talking to a girl about the poor-laws! And he has no land, so nobody takes *his* money for schools—why should he desire to abate *your* philanthropic ardor, Bell?"

"He says we do give a great deal in charity, whether we will or not; there are the poor rates and workhouses, and chaplains for them."

"Oh, well," said Daisy, "but I want to give what I am not obliged to give, and as much as I can."

"I'll give a threepenny bit towards it," exclaimed Tom, producing that coin from his waistcoat pocket; "your sentiments, dear girl, are beautiful."

"I was not joking," answered Daisy, with an ingenuous blush. "Let us do some philanthropy now, And."

"I hope if you do, my dear," said her mother, "it will be something not quite so disastrous as your last experiment."

"About the bracelet?" said Daisy; "but, mother, you promised not to tell."

"I am not going to tell."

"I know already something about a bracelet," observed Andrew.

"Then, may I know something?" asked Mrs. Capper.

"Yes, Cousin Mary, that there was a bracelet I gave away without mother's knowledge. I never ought to have done it—and when I used to look at the fellow to it, I took a dislike to it. It seemed always to remind me of my fault, and so mother consented that it should be sold, and I should give away the money. It sold for fifty pounds, because of the diamond."

"Well, my love?"

"And thirty pounds of it I made a mistake with. I don't wish to tell more than that it was about a tipsy cabman and a little tiny boy."

"Very well," said Andrew, "the tipsy cabman and the little tiny boy nobody even wishes to know anything about. Then it is with the rest of the money that you want to *do a little* philanthropy. Why don't you give half-a-crown a week or so out of your allowance instead? That's the sort of thing I do."

"Half-a-crown! why, that's *nothing*."

"It is at any rate more than the £20—though to be sure you don't spend your money in chocolate as Bell does, so that you have more to spare."

"More than the £20?"

"Why yes; for you do not want that money for

yourself an atom—any more than you wanted the bracelet. It was tight; you know it was, and pinched your arm. Now, half-a-crown a week is money; it's precious. It means the tip-top curly ferns in pots, the dwarf azaleas you are always buying for the schoolroom. The sweet little tree of white-lilacs, the photographs of all sorts of literary fogies, poets, and that kind of thing."

"I never spend more than two shillings a week in chocolate," said Bell, much aggrieved.

"Good child," exclaimed Tom; "I never spent even that; but then I hadn't it to spend."

"Now stop," cried Andrew, in spite of the mother's presence, "where's your handkerchief, Bell? not one word, even if you choke for it. Let us be talking of something else. Did I hear you say anything, Daisy?"

"What you hear me say now is, that I want you to explain what you meant when you said '*that's* the sort of thing *I do*.'"

"But I must not brag of my own good deeds," said Andrew, affecting confusion and laughing.

"Oh, but you should not have begun then, should he, Cousin Mary? I dare say you know."

"About his good deeds?" answered the mother; "well, perhaps I do know of some of them, but certainly not of anything he could have alluded to then."

"Ah!" said Andrew pensively, and heaving up a deep sigh, "I could not lay bare to the eyes of the world my small self-denials—and—and—those delicate little what's-his-names——"

"He means oyster patties, Bell," interrupted Tom gravely. "When he's in London and passes a pastry-cook's shop, and sets his eyes on such he, tears himself away after one sniff. 'No,' he cries, striking himself on his breast,—'no, A. C. Capper, I could, if philanthropy did not forbid it, have eaten five of those dear, delicate little what's-his-names, and they are sixpence each. Here, my brave fellow,' he exclaims to the next crossing-sweeper, while a tear starts in his eye, 'take it all,' and he hands out his weekly half-crown."

"I don't think it is patties," said Martin, who had been listening with the deepest interest; "I think it's cigarettes."

"Are you good now?" said Tom to Bell, quite openly, while they were all laughing, as much at Martin's gravely given opinion as at his own ridiculous speech.

"Ye-es," she answered, half ashamed and half laughing.

"Very well, then, let us see no more of this. Here you are; everything done to make you happy, that we can think of. The Sunday-school treat going to be held this very afternoon at Swandean."

"So called," interrupted Andrew, "because there's not a single swan in it, or near it."

"Just so. At Swandean, the seat of *our promising Squire, the youthful philanthropist*. Was it in his sermon that the archdeacon called you that, And?"

"You know it wasn't, it was only at a meeting."

"Oh, yes, I remember; and you've hated him ever since, and not thought his daughters half so pretty as you did before (very wrong of you, And). 'The youthful philanthropist' it was. And while his excellent mother gives away the prizes, I may tell you in confidence that he is going to play at blindman's buff with the old alms-women, who have been also invited to grace this festive scene."

"Don't believe a word of it, Bell," said Mrs. Capper, when she saw Bell look at Tom with genuine surprise.

"And," said Martin, breaking in again, "cook says it took nine pounds of dripping and fifty eggs, and such lots of raisins, to make the cakes, that she was four days stoning them. (I helped, and so did Danny Callender.) Daisy's going to have a prize."

"Only think," said Cousin Daisy.

"Oh, and there are quantities of things beside cakes."

"How nice!" said Bell; "but it's a pity, And, that you have no swans."

"So it is; but that's not my fault. I sent to Dorsetshire for two, and gave them all sorts of good things to eat while they were in the coop—and then we let them out, and the very next evening they flew away."

"However, that will matter less," observed Tom, "when Fergus has brought you two camels and the hippopotamus: the camels to gambol on the

lawn, and the hippopotamus to splash about in the pond."

"Oh, what a jolly lark," exclaimed the little brother: "but has he really said he shall, And?"

"Well, no, he hasn't actually said so," answered Andrew, "but possibly that was what the letters contained that we didn't get."

"Oh!"

"Fergus will perhaps lead the hippopotamus here with a string, and when he is once in the pond you can feed him with sprats and barley sugar."

"I shall spend my money in buying some for him."

"But the camels," said Tom, "will have to be tied, or they might march up the lane and look in at the windows when we are at church."

"As regards *doing any more* philanthropy, though," said Cousin Daisy, "you seem to have some on hand already; but I really don't think the Sunday-school treat will be done for half a crown apiece! Though to be sure, as you are already of age—perhaps you want your own small economies, whatever they may amount to, against what you propose that Daisy shall save out of her allowance, and call the sum half a crown."

"I don't call the Sunday-school treat philanthropy," exclaimed Andrew, "not exactly——"

"No, nor I either," said Daisy.

At this singular proof of unanimity on the part of the young people, both the mothers smiled.

"Why not?" said Mrs. E. Smith.

"Why, because that's a thing which it really is incumbent on me to do. It would be horridly mean if I did not. The Fords can't have it in their little garden. More than half the parents are my tenants."

"My dear, you forget the children from the town, nearly a hundred of them," said Mrs. Capper.

"Oh yes, I did. Well, so far as they are concerned it is philanthropy. Poor little wretches! Yes, and the paying their fare for this one station that they have to come."

"Yes, that's philanthropy," said Daisy. "It could not be expected of you; it's not an actual duty, that everybody says you ought to undertake, till the noise of what they are saying buzzes in your ears."

"I am very much afraid then that you look on philanthropy as in some sort a work of supererogation," said her mother. "There are no such things in our religion as works of supererogation."

"No, Daisy did not mean that," said Andrew, coming to the rescue; "I think she meant that works of philanthropy were done, less because they are duty, than they are pleasure."

It was only two or three days after this that, to the surprise of his mother, another letter arrived from Fergus. Some of the "mission men," it appeared, had been sent down the river with certain skins, horns, and boxes of insects. Fergus said they were only thirty miles higher up the river than when he had written last, and on its right or north

bank. There they had a splendid camp with a regular stockade, and had been out most days with Major and Cap. stalking and shooting. They had all been rather "seedy," and Jock had had some slight attacks of fever. The two naval men were very well, but said it was not prudent to be much on the river ; said that all, but specially the young'uns, ought always to sleep in the tents, inside the stockade.

"However," continued Fergus, "we have reckoned up the nights we slept on the river since we started, and they were only five ; that's why Jock had fever, Smiles said, but he is such a thundering jackass that he'll say anything. Now I must consider what day it is—the 11th of March, 1885. As I told you when I related all about the natives and tribes and missionaries and snakes, I shall not give you a diary, but only special adventures. So here goes. Yes, my boy, we've been among the lions. There are some perfectly glorious trees not a quarter of a mile from the stockade, and there a sort of platform has been made a good height up, and Major and Cap. consented that we two should sit up three nights ago and shoot with them. It was not till quite dark that we were to steal down the river to the platform in the large canoe, with all the guns and some wraps and a dark lanthorn and some prog—oh, well, I can't tell it all. Jock and I were in the canoe, Cap and Major were coming. It was a strange night, there were such amazing numbers of shooting stars. It made the wild beasts restless to see them ; they cracked and went off

all over like rockets, and the critters howled and grunted at them.

"Well, I was tired while I sat waiting; I fell into a dead sleep. A very few stars were out, because the moon was so bright (I knew that in my sleep), and I dreamed that I was Daniel, and that King Darius was calling to me 'with a lamentable voice,' you know, for I was in the den of lions.

"I was very sound asleep, till I heard one lion give a kind of hollow, long moan. Then all in an instant I was awake. Jock was shaking me, and holding his hand over my mouth to keep me from speaking. We were about forty feet only from the bank, which sloped down to the surface of the water, and there that lion was. He had come down to drink. All the men were lying quite flat at the bottom of the canoe. The lion did not appear to take any notice of us, but laid his chin down among the trampled ferny things and infant palms and roared, or I should call it moaned, in a way that made the whole reach of the river and the forest shake and echo. I saw his melancholy evil countenance, and he slid forward with his paws in the water and lapped. I could see his tongue, and he made such a noise in lapping that one could hear every stroke as plainly as possible. Then he made his awful moaning again, lifted up his great head, and shook his mane to dry it. Meanwhile Jock had been crawling on his stomach, so as not to be seen, over the prostrate cowards to find our guns; and while he fumbled two shots were fired,

and instantly the lion bounded back and was lost in the bush.

"Then directly Major and Cap. boarded us, Major as white as a sheet. The lion had been so close to us! Jock sat down beside him and actually burst into tears—cried, I tell you, with rage and excitement. 'They weren't loaded,' he exclaimed, 'and if you hadn't fired he would have sprung on board!' 'Why no,' said Cap. 'they weren't loaded; we meant to do that when they had been dragged up the tree.' 'And we never had to go at him at all,' said Jock. 'It was a shame.' 'Don't cry, my boy, don't,' said the Major. Jock fumbled for his pocket-handkerchief in vain; Major pulled out his and gave him, and when I saw that I burst out into shouts of laughter. No doubt I was excited too. 'It was hard,' Jock went on. 'I could have shot him easily, only that first this fellow had to be awoke, and then the rifles were not loaded.' All this time the canoe was going down to the trees, and we had the lanthorn lighted; but the strange thing was to hear the sputtering of the meteors and the alligators hissing as they came up to breathe.

"Well, we sat all night on the platform, but no lions. As for our lion, whom Major and Cap. had shot at, we went back at dawn to have a jolly good breakfast inside the stockade, and the sun had hardly risen when some of the gunbearers came and declared that there were marks of blood in the path leading down to that watering-place.

"Off we set, the gunbearers behind us, and we had not gone a quarter of a mile before we saw

THE sight, which will be what I shall dream of now whenever I am deeper asleep than usual. I believe Major was sorry he had brought Jock—the excitement of that boy was portentous.

“There the lion was.

“It was a kind of lair in a narrow gully overshadowed by trees, and the bush was a good deal trodden down. There were several pairs of horns half trampled into it, and some skins. We were near enough to see the marks on them. As to the smell of him and his lair, it seemed as if it would reach from there to the North Pole.

“I put that in because I don’t know how to describe the lion himself. He was crouched with his chin on the ground, and toward us; but in the flash of an eye I could see that he was disabled. ‘Now then, let fly!’ the Major called out. Cap. was a few yards on the left, and did not see him. I felt in that instant—before it could be said I *saw* it—that he was blind, or at least blind of one eye. He actually in the night had not seen us. We did let fly, and the brute, who had raised himself, subsided slowly with one of those awful roars and died.

“We wanted to rush up. ‘No nearer,’ cried the Major. ‘A scratch even from his claw would be poisonous. You are not sure he is dead.’ He died with his eyes wide open, and when we did come up quite close we saw a film over one of them and that the other was dim. He was so old that his skin was not worth saving.

“Those horns all about we two carried off for trophies.

"We are off to shoot for dinner some of the ugliest birds in creation. They look like vultures, but they are a kind of guinea-fowl, and very good to eat. Love to mother and you all. I shall not forget November. That's enough for one letter.

"Yours, &c., F. C.

But that was not enough it seemed. A postscript was added, with a date only ten days later.

"DEAR AND,—It's all up. Oh, I could cry over it, as Jock did over the guns. He is ill, poor fellow, and the fever frequent and serious. We were only ninety miles up the river, and not a glimpse of mountains yet to be seen (perhaps there are none !). Major decided to bring him down as fast as possible in the great canoe. Cap. with Dodd and Smiles, decided to stay behind ; but when I saw the old boy's anxiety, and that all the pleasure Jock had when he was a little better was being with me, I said I should come also. The country is particularly quiet, two of the most warlike tribes gone south after some poor wretches, their enemies, so this portion of the river is deserted, and we shall soon get into the swamps. About half the Zanzibar porters came down with us, and the head man.

"I have no fever worth mentioning. Major shakes a little now and then, but that is partly anxiety about Jock. He often says, when that fellow is asleep and we are out shooting (for we must do that, you know, to supply them all and

ourselves with meat), that he shall never forgive himself for having let him come. Of eland, hart-beest, buffalo, wart-hog, and multitudes of other creatures have we partaken. I felt when first I came here that it was cruel to shoot them, but I remembered that we eat beef and mutton every day at home! There is nothing like the rifle for mercifulness; our butchers are not so quick."

"Cousin Mary," said Daisy, a few mornings after at the breakfast-table. "Andrew says I am demoralized by having so much to give away, and that none of it is really philanthropy."

"Well, I am rather afraid I agree with him," put in Mrs. E. Smith, while the hostess answered—

"I don't think I know what you mean, my dear."

"You should remember," observed Andrew, "that I made that remark mainly because I have not got just now any money to do that sort of thing with. It was, no doubt, a base kind of envy and jealousy more than anything else."

But Cousin Daisy went on—

"What I wish you could remember, love, is that money you have not the least use for is nothing for you to give, thought it *may be* just as much for the poor to receive as if you did want it."

"MAY BE, mother dearest, surely it must be."

"No, perhaps it amounts only to meat and drink. Now, when our Lord promised a blessing to the person who gave a cup of cold water, under certain circumstances, you must remember that

the water cost something real. The woman who gave it would have to go to the well to draw, or she would have already drawn it, and would give it out of the jar which was for the use of the family. Also, the promise implies that she had nothing better to bestow."

"Yes, no doubt."

"Perhaps nothing else at all, and if so the promise was meant to console such as are poor, but loving toward others; but not to please you, and such as you are."

"As to its amounting to anything more than meat and drink, or whatever it was meant to amount to," said Andrew, "how should it?"

"Ah, that is the question. It must in most cases amount to a good deal more unless it is to do harm."

"You mean that if we give to the idle we only encourage them to be more idle; and to the drunkards, we help them to get drunk again."

"I know we ought to be intelligent about it," said Daisy. "Mr. Ford was very right when he said in his sermon that the more we took other people's duties out of their hands and did them ourselves, the more we must; because the more helpless they would become."

"Yes," said her mother, "and if it is agreed that the rich like the pleasure of bestowing out of their abundance, they should be shown the more carefully that they must ask for a heavenly blessing to come down upon their earthly gifts, and then they will be truly worth having."

"But it's hard, mother," said Daisy, "that one must be so afraid of doing more harm than good."

"Oh, well," observed Andrew, "but we are not bound (particularly if we are of the gentler sex, and not quite grown up yet)—not bound to solve all the deepest problems of the day; still we must all give such intelligence as we possess to them. Now as to the tipsy cabman and the little tiny boy: it would do me a great deal of good if I could exercise my intelligence on their story."

"I know that story," observed Tom. "An appreciative young friend——"

"Two months older than you are," Daisy exclaimed in a parenthesis."

"As I was observing when I was interrupted," Tom went on—"has related that experience to me. Wisdom is not perhaps a conspicuous quality in the conduct described."

"I would rather tell it myself than that you should make fun of it," said Daisy.

"It will not be half so long if I tell it," answered Tom. "You need not blush so, 'Miss.' I see nothing to be so much ashamed of, though you did think when the tipsy cabman cried that he was overcome by his feelings only."

"After that," exclaimed Andrew, "nobody knows what we shall think you did if we are not told!"

"It was really not *very* foolish," faltered Daisy. "Well, if you will make it extremely short, Tom."

"All right; I will. Cousin Daisy was gone to see Miss Lancaster who was extremely ill. Mactag-

gart came and said there was a poor man downstairs who seemed in distress of mind, and begged very hard to see her. The Fräulein consented that Daisy should go down with her and speak to him.

"They found a cabman, a very little one, shedding tears copiously. He had a good-sized pocket-handkerchief, which was rather dirty. No, I think you said it was rather clean. He wanted to see C. D.—that's for short. He had a dear precious little daughter thirteen years old; no place for her to live in but the mews—her dear mother dead. He seemed almost as if he wanted to go down on his knees to Fräulein whom he mistook for C. D., and he begged that she would take her and send her abroad to be out of harm's way, and yet he knew it would break his heart to part with her. C. D. not at home; then he would come again to-morrow. Departed with pocket-handkerchief to his eyes.

"That's the end of the first scene—excepting that the hardened old footman said he smelt very strong of gin.

"Next day, Daisy having meanwhile expressed to C. D. that she wanted with some money she had to send the little girl to Canada, with a wooden box, you know, and a nice outfit in it, which would cost——"

"Ten pounds," said Daisy.

"Yes, ten pounds; the passage money to be paid, and the girl to go with that lady, you know, who takes them out. Cousin Daisy—C. D. I mean (for short), after *raisonable* demur consented.

"—Cabman came again; brought a nice little girl,

felt it rather hard that the money was not put into his hands---thought he could do it better ; girl asked if she was willing to go, said 'you bet.'

"I think that part of the legend is beautiful. They went away, cabman crying a good deal. Said he knew it would break his heart to part with his girl. Again the servants said he smelt of gin.

"Little girl sent off to Canada ; cabman came afterwards and cried. Servants said if he did not go '*directly minute*' they would send for the police. So he went.

"Very late the next night came a small boy about seven years old with a letter. Servants just going to bed ; C. D. called down ; child said he could not go till she had it. And here is the letter ; it was meant for Daisy and I kept it, *and* they had to keep the child.

" ' Miss,

" ' You've bin a mother to my gurl, but I can't abear my life without her, so I've sold up my bits of things and broke up my 'ome.

" ' I bought a duck and a loaf of noo bred, and we've 'ad a good supper, me and my boy, which is my only one. I've gone into the cuntry, and nobody'll ever see me moor, in this here city. So I makes over my boy to you, he 'as no hother friend ; yoo take him, Miss, and welcome.

" ' Doo the best, as you 'opes to be done bee.

" ' Youre umbel servant,

" ' MICHAL SMART.' "

CHAPTER VII.

GORGEOUS BROCADES.

AND so cousin Daisy, her visit being over, departed for the North with her two girls, and Tom said how dull it was when they were gone, and Andrew said how dull it was, the mother could not say anything, but like the parrot in the fable she "thought the more."

It was natural enough that Tom should feel the withdrawal of the two girls ; they had both, but especially Daisy, shown the utmost tact, and most constant sympathy with him ; for they always let him see their pleasure in his company, and so enabled him to present himself before them at his best, and yet they never let him see that it was sympathy which drew them towards him. He often forgot that he was a cripple when they were by.

As for Andrew, he always assented when his mother said what a sweet creature Daisy was, how much she was improved in her appearance, and how beautifully she played—but he had his tour to think of, and there was nothing now to prevent his having it with a clear conscience and sooner than he had hoped, for Fergus wanted him to come down to Port Said in September instead of in November.

Accordingly when two swans had been induced

to take up (as was hoped) their permanent abode in Swandean, and when he had chosen two charming wedding presents for Pamela and Bertha, and had been present, together with his mother at their joint wedding, he set off rather before the time actually necessary, that he might linger a little on the Continent before he met his brother as had been arranged.

It is not needful to describe a tour, and enlarge on experiences which mainly concerned Egypt, Burmah, and India, countries which have been fully overrun by tourists, soldiers, civilians, professional travellers, sportsmen, and even invalids. There are full accounts of them even in the guide-books.

Tom proved a good correspondent, and kept his brothers well informed of such things as they wanted to know, including the horses, dogs, puppies, and naturally all the more important creatures, as the younger brothers, who were both getting on "stunningly" at school, the Fords, who were so crowded in their little house now Mrs. Ford was ill and had the jaundice that mother had taken three of the boys for a visit and really contrived to make them behave tolerably ; and Cowper, who was now openly engaged to Antoinette, had another, till the little wretch contrived to get himself as nearly as possible drowned in the pond, whereupon Aunt Hitchcock had proposed that he should go up and pay a visit to her in Bloomsbury—she was not afraid of any boy—so Mr. Ford thankfully consenting, Cowper took him up—and the next day he got

out and lost himself somehow, and they had to tell the police, and Aunt Hitchcock fainted before he was found, with a guinea pig under his arm which he had bought in some "slum."

Such news as this appeared to be all there was to tell for some months, but while they were at Rangoon came such an astonishing letter as almost took their breath away.

Daisy's guardian had run away. He was as the brothers knew a great racing man, a great gambler, and very extravagant, but he was supposed to be extremely rich, and always, of course paid his falsely called "debts of honor," with perfect readiness, and promptitude.

Tom had sent some newspapers—the whole account was in them. He had also seen Cousin Daisy's letters to his mother and was afraid the disaster was without remedy. Daisy's father had left her no land, only money, all sorts of shares, and when the matter came to be investigated it was found that most of these shares were actually sold. Then there were many thousands of pounds out at interest. They were gone—spent.

There had never been the slightest hesitation on the part of this same nefarious guardian about producing any sum the mother wished for, to be spent on Daisy's maintenance or education, and he always sent the income she was to have for her life to the exact day. Bell had a different guardian—her father wishing to compliment a nephew of his, who was in trade, had given him this trust. That property remained precisely as before. But as for Daisy, her

guardian had disappeared and his ruin was complete. The whole of Daisy's fortune had been in his hands since she was four years old, and there was nothing left for her to have. It was all gone and spent and besides that it was discovered that he had left the country deeply in debt.

Cousin Daisy had £150 a year of her own, that she thought was all she and her eldest daughter would now have to live on, and it was supposed that the guardian had been spending the heiress's money ever since it came into his keeping.

In a second letter Tom remarked that Cousin Daisy took the matter like a saint.

There were a good many jewels which could be sold.

"Oh" exclaimed Fergus, "then they will be supplied with plenty of money for some time, even if none of it is sold to make a small income."

But as Tom's next sentence was :—"And so she hopes that no one will lose anything by her dear child; who of course wishes that all household debts should be paid out of this, and their ordinary Christmas bills. Also that Fräulein should have a quarter's salary given to her, and her journey money so that she may go home.

"Bell is engaged to Algy Dean."

"I say, what about Tom Hitchcock now?" exclaimed Fergus—"and look here, the first of these letters was written three months ago. I told you that if we kept changing our route, the letters would chase us about all over."

Luckily the next address which had been given

by the brothers was unchanged ; accordingly they got a letter from Tom there at the proper date.

Bell, it appeared, was actually married.

Bell was barely eighteen, wanted in fact three months of eighteen.

"Not a word has been said by Daisy or her mother, but our mother is sure they do not like the affair, and I saw in C. D's letter that the Deans have tied up Bell's fortune to her with great strictness. There seemed to be a sort of idea on Cousin Daisy's part that the girls would share."

"Why, of course," interrupted Fergus.

"But no such thing—her guardian said he had no power to allow anything of the sort. The Deans too are almost proverbially mean, and as far as mother can judge they have got Bell completely under their thumb and got the affair hurried on various pretences, lest Bell should insist on giving Daisy even a few thousands."

"Mamma went up to town, to give what help she could to C. D. She thought she would be so cheated if she was left quite to herself.

"She said when she came home that she really thought Daisy and her mother were more vexed because Bell had not come out all that was high-minded, than at anything else whatever. Daisy talks of being a governess."

"Droll," said Andrew, "but the creature has such a placid temper, that she won't much mind the teasing of children. I never saw her in the least out of temper in my life."

"And then she has had a most excellent educa-

tion," observed Fergus, "so that really though I wouldn't be her, I shouldn't mind being the children."

Little more news than this came to the two brothers. Bell was on the Continent. She and Algernon Dean were on their wedding-tour. Cowper and Antoinette were to be married in six weeks.

"I wonder," observed Fergus, "whether Daisy will take Tom Hitchcock now. After saying that he has been devoted to her so long when she was out of his reach, he cannot withdraw now—and as his father is said to be rich, and he is clever, I should think they might marry."

Andrew left Fergus when he had only been eleven months on his travels, hot climates did not suit him as well as they did his brother, and he set forth home, having gained at least two years in apparent age, and more still in manliness and experience.

He arrived at London, and passed through the square, where was Cousin Daisy's town house which had so often received him. It was empty, and the windows and even the walls were placarded with notices of a sale of furniture, pictures, books, china, household linen, and other possessions of the late occupiers. This sale had already taken place and the fluttering placard made the house look extremely forlorn.

The effect was almost disreputable to his eyes.

He went on to his Aunt Hitchcock's much more commonplace residence.

He had brought a wedding-present for Antoi-

nette which was already promised, and he expected to find a letter there from his mother.

Everything looked dingy: London was dark, dirty, the streets were rather narrow. So was the door he thought, and the hall of his aunt's house.

She was very cordial, Antoinette had been married three days, and she and her husband were on their wedding tour. Wedding cake was handed to him with his tea—and the present, a vase from India, was duly admired.

The conversation soon drifted to Cousin Daisy and the girls.

"This is great news for Tom," said Andrew with some interest.

"What is?" asked his aunt with an air of surprise.

"Why of course, I am sorry for Daisy—poor girl, but after Tom has been so devoted, so deeply in love for so long——"

"Nonsensical boy! Yes, he was fond of saying so," interrupted the aunt——"Andrew went on all the time. "But now, who can say, there may actually be a chance for Tom—and he may find——"

"You talk as if you were really demented," exclaimed Mrs. Hitchcock.

"Do I?" said Andrew.

"Do you really suppose—even if he had not long seen his folly, in fact ever since her mother (being told of his devotion) forbade his writing or giving her presents, do you really suppose that a young man with slender means, could, without the wildest

imprudence, propose to marry a girl who has been brought up to have carriages and riding horses at her disposal, and more money than she knew how to spend. Do you really——”

“I am not sure that I do,” said Andrew when she stopped an instant for breath, “Oh, and so he has got over that lifelong infatuation, has he?” and in spite of himself he smiled.

Mrs. Hitchcock’s color had become very high. Andrew was almost afraid he was carrying the matter too far, but Fergus had been urgent to know how it stood, and what had been done with Daisy’s photograph—had it, as Fergus declared, been thrown away, or did Tom still burn a night light before it? He felt that he could not ask, so he contented himself by saying in a cogitative tone, “I always said, you know—at least I said several times that I was sure it would never be.”

And presently the excellent upright old uncle came in, before whom Aunt Lucia took pains almost always to say what was true and real, and of others what was kind.

Tom followed; Andrew thought he looked at him with rather a meaning smile.

He was quite friendly—only wished he also could get a year to go to the east—was full of interest in Andrew’s adventures—and when he took his leave followed him out to the hired cab he had at the door.

“Shake hands, old fellow,” he said after Andrew was actually in the cab. “It was a sell for both of us wasn’t it,” and he straightway went in.

"He means that he saw me on my knees," thought Andrew, as the four-wheeler went slowly jogging on—and so considered me a rival. I said he would ! But he intends to express to me (I wish I hadn't done it though) that he doesn't care now—*Mercenary little load.*"

So Andrew arrived at home and was received with rapture by his family, who were all at Swan-dean as he was told at the station, where he was met by his servants with a carriage and two carts for the collection of curiosities that he had brought with him. These included some orchids from Burmah, a number of horns, skins and shells that Fergus had given to him and his mother, and a great deal of pottery and metal work from India, which had cost as much as it was worth in carriage. He even brought presents for Saunders, Callender and the cook, this last on account of her attention to Tom, for the young woman who cooked and milked the cow at the Dower House, was all very well, but Mrs. Murphy, constantly affirming that the young master had intended it, used to keep her hand in, by making all sorts of delicacies for Mr. Tom besides trudging over once a week to see him, and bring something good, and hear the latest news of the squire.

How pleasant it all was, Mrs. Capper had not merely got her son back again, but he was so much improved, so much more manly, that she felt she had now, what she had longed for, some one to rely on, to depend upon almost as years ago she had done on his father.

She stayed at Andrew's house for a week, before she went back to her own. The two boys, Miles and Martin who had been allowed to come for three days to welcome him, were sent off to school. "I suppose," said Miles, "that whenever Fergus gets back—we shall of course come home just to welcome him too," while Mrs. Capper was considering what to say and wishing she had not created a precedent, Andrew smiled and said:

"No, dear boy, I think not."

Tom slept in the library on the ground floor, and while sitting in the hall, mother and son, amused themselves by looking on, while Andrew had his cases unpacked and exhibited his effects.

"I like this gorgeousness," he remarked, while out of one particular box he hauled brocades, and embroidered satins and silks, muslins and gauze-like fabrics bedecked with beetles wings, and white Indian muslins enriched with delicate needlework.

Saunders and Terence had been dismissed to their dinner.

"I thought, mother," said Andrew, "you would choose a couple of the silk dresses, and look at the feathers!—you'll have those, of course."

"My dear," she answered in mild deprecation, "I have only worn black yet." The silks were gorgeous beyond expression, especially the colored brocades—"I think some of these are meant to cover sofas, and settees," she said admiringly, and not to disappoint him.

"You think you might not like to wear this—well, it is rather a large pattern."

"I call it stunning," exclaimed Tom, who, as well as Andrew, was without much taste or observation as regards dress.

"Well, mother, you'll have all this—and do as you like with it—now this," taking up a specially brilliant silk with gold thread woven into it—"if you think the pattern too large for you, might please Cousin Daisy."

"Not to wear," said Mrs. Capper.

"Oh, you think not—then for covering furniture."

"Dear boy, she is living just now in seaside lodgings!"

"Oh, yes, so you said; but I must give her something. If they had not lost their property, some china or a vase or two would have done." He lifted a piece of fine Indian muslin—"Do you think that would do for Daisy? But *perhaps* I might not give her anything to wear."

"No, I think you may not; and as to some of these lovely shells—and these skins of birds, I don't know where she is to keep them, if you give them to her, for as I told you she is living for the present with Pamela and Mr. Belmore, teaching the children and trying to keep them in order."

"How ridiculous of Cousin Daisy to let her begin governess work so soon—almost as ridiculous as it was of Pamela to marry 'the Cossack'."

"You think that was ridiculous? Well, I don't know. (I wonder how she liked your always calling Mr. Belmore the 'Cossack'.) To be sure his being a widower with all those children is a dis-

advantage, but then she is greatly attached to him, and naturally they could not know that all the children would be so ill, that they would have to be fetched home from their wedding tour—and then that they would be ill again almost all last winter and have to be taken for such a long time to the sea. Then, as to Daisy, her mother is constantly expecting to have to go over to Bell who is at Homberg—very unwell and very much out of spirits. Algernon Dean is to summon her when he likes, and has not invited her to take Daisy with her.”

“Very natural,” said Andrew. “Daisy was always making game of him.”

“And that was very natural,” observed Tom, “for she told me several times that he was a muff, and she did not believe he had even then made up his mind quite to give *her* up, though he had made Bell believe he was deeply attached to her.”

“Well, then, it was also natural that Daisy should not like to go to Homberg without an invitation,” said the mother, “and also that when the Belmores came to that very little seaside place where she and her mother had gone just to rest, after this miserable business, and wait till Algernon chose to write, Daisy should ask Pamela (who already has a young infant of her own, to attend to), if she would like to have her as an interim governess. She knew the Belmores were looking out for one and she had met her several times last autumn when they were here. Cousin Daisy had only gone there to stay two or three weeks.”

"Oh," said Andrew innocently, "I suppose that was before you knew ; or you would have asked them to come here."

Mrs. Capper paused an instant and then said—

"Yes." She was fond of Daisy, but things were very much altered now. Who could deny it.

"And not a soul of all the people who used to toady her, had gone down on *both his knees* to entreat her company," said Andrew. "Droll !"
The brothers both laughed with exquisite enjoyment of this, without having the least perception that it included their mother.

"But, mamma," said Andrew, "don't you think that in a few days I had better just go down and see them ? Cousin Daisy was always so affectionate to me. Surely among all these boxes there must be something I might give them. I should not have cared to do it while they were so rich—but now—"

Mrs. Capper at that moment had a great struggle with herself, and all that was best in her contended against interfering in the matter.

Her eyes wandered over the tumbled heap of finery, curiosities, china,—she remembered Mrs. E. Smith's words about her son, and consciously plagiarized them in her mind. "I have that opinion of her that I know she will make no effort to get Andrew for her child. She will merely leave it to him to speak if he loves her."

The better self prevailed.

She pointed to a beautiful carved fan. "Let me look at that," she said.

Andrew handed it to her—"no" she thought, "if I do it at all, I will do it as she would have done it to me."

"You did not bring this on purpose for Daisy, of course?"

"Oh, no," said Andrew.

"Well, suppose you give it to *me* then."

"To you, mother? Well I do."

"Yes. Well, now you can say that your mother thought it would be so much more appropriate for a girl that she sent it to Daisy, with her love." "There, now," she thought, "if he means nothing but civility, such a present so given will not commit him."

"And there's a handsome inlaid paper case. I should think you might give that to Cousin Daisy. She can carry it about with her anywhere. It is not cumbersome."

Tom and Mrs. Capper went back to the Dower House.

"Mother," said Andrew, coming over the next morning after breakfast, "I want to tell you of something that I have done."

"Yes?" she asked.

Tom was wheeling himself about in one of his chairs, among the flower beds, and giving directions to a boy who was weeding; they both looked at him.

"I suppose he will never be better," observed Andrew.

"No," said the mother. "Is it not wonderful how patient and cheerful he is? I believe, Andrew,

we are very much indebted to that woman, Mrs. Blount, he talks with her. He is very resigned now to the will of God. She told me the other day that he said he was very much happier now that he was able to submit, and did not rage against his lot."

"She said so to me, too, and that Mr. Ford had persuaded him that it was unmanly as well as wrong, not to go to church lest people should look at him."

"Yes, but he was excessively nervous the first time he went, and then Mr. Ford saw that a little curtain which would pass for a screen, to keep off any draught from the door, would be a good thing. It was put up at once, of course, and now he does not so much mind. The congregation does not see him sitting up in his chair."

"But I have been thinking, mother, what an expense he must always be to you—"

"Yes," she interrupted, "and in addition to his misfortunes, I have the anguish of knowing that it was partly my fault—I always was so anxious that none of you should be wanting in courage—and—a proper daring. It was ignorance, no doubt, on my part, and you did warn me—but I thought he ought to be able to manage that mare—I thought it only wanted ordinary intelligence to drive."

"Well, dear mother," said Andrew, seeing her tears, "you did not know much of horses, excepting those in a London cab or fly."

"No, and I forgot that your father—when you

had that little legacy, had made you spend it in learning to ride and drive."

"We must all make mistakes sometimes. But, mother, this last has been a remarkably cheap year—I was away, the game was sold, and a quantity of the produce of the home farm,—in the meantime my expenses were small—and so besides my savings, I have burdened the estate with a very trifling sum so that I may buy an annuity for Tom of three hundred a year. As he had got older it would certainly have been bitter to him to be utterly dependent for everything on you, even for his pocket money,—of course he will always live with you, but now he will not feel that he is at such a terrible disadvantage."

Perhaps this was not philanthropy. Certainly it was nothing but a family duty in the view of the perpetrator.

"O, how like his voice is to his father's," thought Mrs. Capper, as Andrew went off. "I often feel as if my dear husband was talking to me, yes, and how like the things are that he says—what does he not deserve of me!"

A young man walking about with rather a large parcel in his keeping. The sea flashing on his right, a little street running up on his left.

"Now what is the name of that Terrace, or was it Place," he was saying, "I think it was. How could I be so ridiculous as to take for granted that I knew it—before I started.

"Mrs. E. Smith did not say, sir," when he accosted a person at the little post-office.

"Yes, I thought you would be sure to know here."

The post-office was also a milk-shop, and had some apples, and some sweets and some buttons in the window.

"You see, sir, Smith's a very uncommonly common name," said the post-mistress in a tone of apology.

As she spoke Andrew turned his head.

A fine tall girl in a gown of sailor-blue serge and a flapping hat was passing the window some way off with several children in her wake.

She had a plentiful head of hair, almost flaxen in its fairness, hanging down her back, and floating over her shoulders. If she had been bathing a delightful fresh wind had already dried it.

The children, all girls, also had their hair down their backs.

The tall girl turned seaward, and all the children pounded after her among the loose stones and dry sand.

"I wonder whether that's Daisy," thought Andrew, "but if I followed and called her it would be rather awkward if it was not. No, that girl looks rather slender—and how well she walks—we used to think Daisy too fat, and almost clumsy before she was grown up."

In the meantime he got Mrs. E. Smith's address, and turned with his parcel to see her, and get rid of it.

"Oh, such a little place!"—"No, sir, Mrs. Smith is not at home," said the landlady.

"Will you say, then, that Mr. Capper called and left this parcel?" He produced a card. "I shall call again in the evening." He had been shown into a small parlor and put the parcel on a round table covered with American cloth. There was a little shabby looking-glass over the chimney-piece and there were four smart books laid symmetrically on a little side-table, with a bell glass containing some artificial flowers between them.

Six chairs and a sofa completed the furniture.

Andrew was almost dismayed.

"To come to this," he thought, "after all that luxury and splendor—"

No, there was one other thing in the room, a violin, with a stand and some music upon it. The very duet, was at the top of it that Algernon Dean went down on *both his knees* to beg for.

Andrew did not put his thought into words, but when he saw this immense change he felt he did not exactly know how to meet Cousin Daisy and her daughter. How should he throw enough condolence into his manner, what could he say?

"I shouldn't wonder," he thought, as he came back to the little bricked frontage of the lodging-houses called (perhaps for fun) the Parade. "I shouldn't wonder if that was Daisy."

He walked some distance along the sand, but no group reminded him of the tall girl who was walking so well, in her dark gown, among the dishevelled children.

Perhaps he had strolled on half a mile when he saw a group, heard infantine singing, and another voice put in a note here and there.

Then suddenly a clear voice called out—"Mar-ty, Mar-ty."

"Ye-es," shrieked the child's voice on the other side.

"You're not to go so near the wa-ave, the tide's rising."

He thought that must be Daisy's voice and stopped short, when straightway the little child squatted on the girl's dark gown went on with her song: "Him little heart was so full of sorrow, sorrow, sorrow—"

"Now Mit Miff, oo didn't help—"

"Yes, I'm helping," said the tall girl, and then the two sang together, but the small voice was far the most shrill and distinct:

"If mit mine oo'l blent oo lot,
O what we hav'in got,
Of de neighbors we can borrow, borrow, borrow.

The girl was sitting in the shadow of the cliff, and just under it.

He came up almost close, she did not lift her head, and the flapping hat completely hid her face.

She was making a sketch, and the little one squatting on her gown was watching her.

He came yet a step nearer, and lifted his hat, still not quite sure; he had not seen her for more than a year.—Then she, seeing a gentleman's legs, raised her face and put a stop to his uncertainty.

Daisy! He remembered her expression as he first caught sight of her, ever after.—Perhaps she remembered his—but it is certain these same expressions both changed to the utmost surprise.

“Andrew!” she exclaimed, almost incredulous in spite of her eyes. “Why, how is this? we had no notion that you had returned from India yet.”

He sat down beside her.

“This really is you, I suppose,” she went on when she had shaken hands with him.

He hardly knew what he answered, he was instantly obliged to put away all thoughts of condolence. How serene, how contented she had looked! He perceived plainly how much she was improved, there was more bloom in her cheeks, more sweetness in the smile—but, besides that, the creature as she sat making her sketch had evidently been happy.

He hoped Cousin Daisy was well.

A smile of pleasure softened Daisy’s mouth.

“O yes, dear mother was very well now,” she said.

“And you too? You look uncommonly well,—and pleased,” he added.

“Yes, I am pleased, thankful; for we have had very good news of Bell—Bell has been extremely unwell, and we got a letter from her, herself, this morning to say she felt quite well again. And what could possibly have brought you to this out of the way little place?” she went on.

“*You know!*” he exclaimed almost indignantly—and when she looked at him he continued “you

cannot possibly think I should let such—losses—such changes come over you and Cousin Daisy, and not come near her to express my concern to—to condole with her—to ask if by chance there might be any business I could help her to transact—and whether there was anything I might be allowed to do.”

Daisy looked out to sea. Her eyes more moist than usual appeared to wander over the fishing boats, and mark the deep blue rim of the calm horizon. When she turned to him he was surprised to hear that her voice was just a little agitated. She said :—

“How pleased mother will be.”

And then she laughed.

CHAPTER VIII.

PAMELA'S DISCOVERY.

AND then she laughed—Daisy actually laughed !

“Poor mother, dear, dearest mother.”

“Cousin Daisy feels it deeply ?” Andrew asked.

“Well, who can wonder—of course she does.”

“Feels *it*,” repeated Daisy, “no, she doesn’t feel *it*, if by that you mean the mere loss of the income, the merely not being rich, mother does not feel that more than I do. Perhaps not as much. Mother has so little pride, and she is so religious too, that she couldn’t mind *that*.” Then Daisy paused, and laughed again. “Do you remember how you and Fergus used to talk to us ?”

Andrew looked a little out of countenance. “If we ever said that your having such large fortunes did not make you more charming than other girls,” he began.

“You know you did !” she interrupted, “there is no occasion to argue about it. I fully agree with you of course.”

“You are quite charming enough,” he replied, with sudden and grave conviction, “either with fortune or without.”

O, what multitudes of compliments had been

paid to Daisy! It is possible that this one impressed her, for she went on with her drawing and said not a word. Her little pupil put down her rosy cheek on Daisy's knee, and closed her eyes. The newly-made governess, opened her large sunshade, and placed it so as to shade the little sleepy creature. The other children were now making a castle in the sand not far off.

Andrew watched it all, with an idle sense of peace and well-being.

"I am glad I came home," he said. "It's all very well to have known the wonders of the sun, and to see the stars flash at one as if they meant to strike,—but this is better—I like to hear my own language in the streets. As for you, Daisy, you speak English delightfully."

"Do I?" said Daisy, looking pleased, "but that is only nature. It will not get me a good situation—"

"O, how *ridiculous* that sounds!" exclaimed Andrew, and she went on:

"It's my French and German that will, I hope, do that! Yes, it does seem almost ridiculous to myself sometimes, but at any rate I have learned to do without a maid."

"What! can you plait up all your long hair yourself?"

"Of course, and post my letters myself."

"But if Cousin Daisy—I always knew she was a saint—if she does not feel the loss of riches. I wish you would tell me what it is that she does feel."

Daisy looked at him and blushed.

"Because," he went on, "if I don't know I may hurt her. It is certain that not the shadow of any blame can attach to her because your guardian proved a scamp."

"Oh, no, of course not—but Bell and I often felt that mother did not know the world half so well as we did. And that was why she expected so much more—no, it was not mere expectation. She was sure of—she took for granted so much more.

"We knew just as well as you did (Andrew rather winced when she said this) that the outrageous compliments paid us, and all that admiration was sham—and the many offers made us were for our fortunes and for nothing else. But I think she was a good deal deluded about us—some mothers are, she thought some of the affection professed for her and for us was real—"

"And now?" asked Andrew.

"Well, she did not say much—but I know that she was—when the great smash came, and all my fortune and her income toppled over—and nobody came forward—she was—"

"Surprised?" suggested Andrew.

"Yes—"

"Because nobody went down on *both his knees* and entreated as usual that you would condescend to accept him, and everything he had, and was."

"Just so—Cousin Mary came to see us—She walked in all by herself, nobody else was there to give advice, or assistance. She looked round as if she expected to find a swarm of friends and rela-

tions with us. I was sitting on a box containing some of my very own things—such as my music and my violin—I could not help laughing, for I understood perfectly—and she went up to dear mother, and hugged her.”

“Dear creature,” exclaimed Andrew “I should like to hug her, too.”

“They both shed a few tears—and mother was better after that.”

“Where was Bell?”

“O, the Deans got her utterly into their power—Algernon had made her truly love him.”

“Well, I hope he loves her, then.”

“She has married him, so let us hope he does,” said Daisy after a significant pause, “but you know that the darling creature had no power to divide her fortune with me—”

“Always excusing that weak, silly girl—” thought Andrew, “just the same Daisy as ever.”

Then when he made no answer she went on.

“The doctors say that her health will always be most uncertain, and she says she shall want mother to be with her a good deal—so of course I must have a home—at least I mean that I must have a proper home excepting in the holidays—”

“And then you will come and stay with your friends?”

“Yes,” said Daisy with a certain hesitation which made him aware that as yet she had not been overwhelmed with invitations, and then they went on talking of various things till she almost dismissed him by saying :—

"Well, now, mother will be in—she dines early and has high tea about six o'clock—have tea with her, and Andrew—" she looked at him with a slight blush, "you will let mother know you came on purpose to condole or whatever one would call it, you would like to give her pleasure?"

"Indeed I should."

"Well, that will give her pleasure—it is the help, the only kind of help you can give."

So Andrew set forth to give this pleasure but, in a few minutes turning his head to look behind him he saw that Daisy had collected her little tribe, and was bringing them away, so he went back to them, and set the little one who was very cross after her sleep, on his shoulder. In this style they all proceeded to the house the Belmore were lodging in. Little Mrs. Belmore, seeing them from the window came forth to the door. "Who would have thought of seeing you!" she exclaimed in almost the same words that Daisy had used. "Where are you staying?" He named the only hotel the little place boasted of.

"Do come and lunch with us to-morrow," she said "The *Cossack* is away, but Miss Smith and I will be very glad of your company; we never see a soul."

"O, mamma," exclaimed the eldest girl in a conscientious spirit, "why it's only three weeks since that Scripture Reader came, and father asked him in."

"Very true, Marty," said the young step-

mother as Andrew took his leave. "I had forgotten."

Andrew went back to Cousin Daisy's lodgings. She was at home. He was naturally not afraid now of being what Daisy years ago had called *relationy*.

He entered, and, as if he had been a nephew, greeted her with a kiss.

One or two tears stole down her face. She appeared well, and perhaps all the more so because her dress was very handsome, and looked conspicuously out of character with the shabby little parlor.

Mrs. E. Smith had no misgivings about inconsistency, she possessed many handsome gowns, and she wore them, for it would not have suited her convenience to spend even so much as half a crown in buying anything new.

She was very straightforward and simple. She did notice that the greeting was uncommon and received pleasure from it.

"The Cappers," was her thought, "were always different from other people. What affectionate letters poor Tom wrote and does still to Daisy. Well, I have not lost all my friends after all."

"I wanted to see whether there was anything I could possibly do," said Andrew.

"No, dear fellow," she answered, "I wish there was. I like to see you though, and hear you say so."

"You look well, Cousin Daisy."

"Yes, and I am well, I am thankful to say, and

when you see Daisy I am sure you will say that she looks well and cheerful."

"O, I have seen Daisy ; I sat with her on the beach, and walked home with her and the Belmore children ; she looks extremely well—I never saw anyone so much improved, and one might really think she liked playing the governess, she was so cheerful."

"It does me good to hear you say so," said Mrs. E. Smith. "Daisy is so anxious to make the best of things to me, that I have been almost afraid she affected more cheerfulness than she felt, when I was by."

"She said she was happy because you had had such good accounts of Bell."

"It was wrong of me to be so anxious," said Mrs. E. Smith, seeming to consider her words and speak with studied moderation, "but I had not a very high opinion of that young man, and Daisy positively disliked him ; but we were both greatly relieved this morning when my dear child, who had been very ill, and in low spirits, wrote and said she felt quite well again."

Andrew presented his little gift, and left the fan for Daisy, and after a while went away to his hotel to dine, leaving the whole tribe of the Cappers, including the mother, very much in Cousin Daisy's good graces.

Little Mrs. Belmore, as Cousin Daisy told Andrew before he parted from her, was very much out of health, and found her own young infant and her husband's large family far too much for her strength.

On this account he did not choose to go to the house before the time when he had been invited to luncheon—and when he appeared he found her already seated at one end of the dining table and Daisy marshalling the children.

Daisy, when seated between the two youngest, seemed very much at her ease. Andrew sat near the hostess.

A large, rather badly cooked leg of mutton was set on the table, Andrew asked if he might carve, and turned the dish toward him. Daisy cut up the meat and mixed it with potatoes for the little ones as if she had been accustomed to be a nursery governess all her life. Then she sprinkled the plates with a little salt, and as the servant of the house had no notion of waiting, got up and brought round some water which she poured into the children's glasses.

Quite aware that he must not attempt to help her, Andrew sat still, and presently Mrs. Belmore said :

“ We find this house such a pleasant change after Belmore's vicarage. This is a charming room, is it not?—such a fine view of the sea.”

“ O, delightful,” exclaimed Andrew, hardly knowing what he said.

Daisy also had something to say in praise of the air, and the good sands so nice for the children to play on. As the meal went on, and the pudding came in, all the children broke out into exclamations of approval. “ *It was big, and such lots of raisins on the top !* ”

The delicate little stepmother, was wonderfully

changed from that Pamela Delany who had shown Andrew the photograph of the "Cossack," but about this period in the dinner she suddenly seemed to pluck up spirit. What it was that interested her did not appear, but she let her artless young governess quite alone.

Every time Daisy saw that anything was wanted, she got up and provided it, serenely unconscious that she was affording a certain degree of amusement to Pamela, and also that Andrew was just the least in the world ashamed of himself.

Why?—Well, once when a momentary flash of displeasure had shown itself in his face on seeing Daisy almost waiting at table, he had met Pamela's eyes, and they had said to him as plainly as any speech from her could have done, "I know all about it."

All about what? If he scarcely knew before she looked at him, so much was he surprised at himself and his emotion, he did afterwards, and for the short remainder of the meal, he sat almost silent.

Not that there was the slightest struggle in his mind—he gave way at once. It merely seemed to him that his eyes were now opened.

With a flash of thought he perceived that he could now do exactly as he liked. He had been slightly in danger—very slightly as regarded Daisy before. Now nobody could despise him, as wanting to marry a great heiress for her fortune.

While he ate his cheese he settled that matter, and before he rose from table he remembered *how*

fond his mother was of her! So he naturally believed, "As indeed," he thought, "everyone must be, sweet creature."

"Mr. Capper," said Mrs. Belmore, "I am ashamed to ask it of you—but I have only one servant here—my nurse—"

"What can I do?" he asked.

She had gone to her writing-table and was scribbling off a little note, which she twisted up and directed.

"If you would not mind undertaking this for me I should be so much obliged—"

Andrew consented of course.

"And, oh, mamma," exclaimed the eldest girl, "will Mr. Capper take me too? You did say that the very first person who went out, I might go, to spend my sixpence."

"I did not mean Mr. Capper," said Mrs. Belmore.

"You must wait, dear."

"But I should like to have them," said Andrew.

"He said *them*," exclaimed the next child starting up, and in one moment they had both darted out of the room to get their hats and gloves, and the next little sister was in tears because she was not to go also.

But whatever may have been in that note which was directed to Mrs. E. Smith was not of much use for the moment—In less than half an hour the two little girls burst in again with some crackling paper parcels in their arms and Andrew at their heels.

"O such grandeur, mamma," exclaimed Marty, the eldest.

"Why this was never bought with your birthday sixpence," said the stepmother laughing.

"Mrs. Smith was out, so we left the note," Andrew said.

"O," said Daisy, addressing Mrs. Belmore, "this is mother's day for reading to the old Almswomen—I could have told you that, dear, if you had said your note was for her."

"But look, mamma," cried one and the other as a Noah's ark and a large doll, were thrust up into her face.

"And Mr. Capper said my sixpence was of no consequence—so I shall give it to Clare."

"And me, too, want to go out wiff Mr. Capper," cried the smallest of the tribe.

"Very well," said Andrew, assenting with great cheerfulness, "then whenever Miss Smith is ready we may all go together, perhaps."

"I am quite ashamed," exclaimed Mrs. Belmore. "I hope and trust, children, that you did not ask for these beautiful toys."

The children blushed. Andrew scarcely noticed what she had said, he was looking after Daisy who was carrying the little one out to have her face washed. "Me too," she shouted turning her face over Daisy's shoulder.

"What does it signify," thought Mrs. Belmore, and she let them all alone.

The whole tribe scuttled out of the room after Daisy, and there was presently heard a good deal of scuffling in the back parlor where they all were. Pamela who had the most puny of infants lying

flat on her knee, sat perfectly silent for awhile, till Andrew, remarking how she looked down on the small face and hands, remembered that it was incumbent on him to say something civil concerning this new arrival in our midst. He got up, and he also regarded the small thing attentively, then using the word which always amused her he said : " The Cossack would be proud to have a boy at last, after his many girls."

She assented with an air of sincere conviction, and added : " And, Mr. Capper, that note I sent by you to Mrs. Smith was to propose that Daisy should go and spend the evening with her. She has never left me once before, since I had her. If you chance to go there you will find her with her mother."

At that instant, and before Andrew had done more than look his thanks, the whole tribe came pouring back again and closed him in. They all wanted his hands, some from hope and some from gratitude. It was plain that he was to go to the toy shop again immediately.

So to the toy shop they went, and it was a delightful visit for all parties.

The mistress whispered to her young daughter that " This here gentlemen was what you med call a real gentleman."

The little girls were in an ecstasy, even the two elder ones had something added to their former plunder. The younger ones chose what was biggest as also what professed to be musical, and they

made their property drum and squeak without any reference to what their sisters were about.

As for Andrew there were intervals while the weighty matter of choice was going on, when he could snatch a few delightful minutes of discourse with Daisy,—once or twice she blushed very much and this made the greater impression on him, because in former days she had not been at all inclined to blushing.

“It is extraordinary,” thought Daisy, “that he has become almost, quite indeed as deferential and as complimentary, too, as other young men ; he does it on purpose, no doubt. Yes, I am poor now and I am a governess !” She was a very artless girl, she went on and finished her thought thus : “But if any of them in the days when we were rich, had done it—as *he does*—I should certainly have been taken in.”

And while she so thought, the bill was handed up to Andrew, and at the same moment a black cloud which had been hanging over burst, and the little street was deluged with rain. No pleasant walk to be looked for now, no sitting on the sands. There was nothing to be done but to leave the party in the toy shop and fetch four umbrellas. He carried the little one home, and Daisy splashed on beside him. Then when they reached the house he had to leave them to go to his hotel—there was no pretence on which he could enter. So he went to his hotel, and there found letters from home, including one from Fergus, which had been sent on.

"DEAR OLD AND,"—It began, and it set forth that the writer was rather dull without his brother, "but as to these 'hills', as they call them, they make one wonder the moon does not catch on them as she goes round.

"And the steepness of them !

"And the absolute impossibility of getting up them !

"And the certainty that some of those peaks whether they were bubbles in the aqueous fabric, or volcanoes, shot up by the seething mass inside were never got up aloft by agencies acknowledged and understood and confessed by mortals, as natural forces, but must have had an extra heave from the great Creator just to show how uneven the world could be and yet not rock as it rolled—all these considerations perfectly addled my brain for some days—I almost thought I should like to run away."

Then Fergus, after a good deal more rhapsody, named a place much frequented by the English at the right time of year. To this his letters were to be directed, and he hoped to be back shortly and get them. He added : "As I write I can see a good sized island about the size of the largest Egyptian pyramid hanging up aloft with no roots, as it seems in our world. You have to crick your neck to look up at it as it hangs among some black clouds which close it round. That's not one of the loftier peaks, O, dear, no. That is a mountain which you can scale.

"There, now, I'll put this away till I come back, after going higher."

The writing was bad, and Andrew read with but little attention. He was thinking of something else, or rather of some one else.

Andrew blundered on, till it appeared that Fergus had got down from the hills, and was in rather an out-of-the-way place, steep, very lonely, but not dangerous.

Then the letter went on, "Such a strange thing has happened. Such a sad thing. Do you remember that I told you long ago about a girl called Tammy, and how pretty she was, and how intimate we became in one day. I used to think about her, now and then, partly on account of a ridiculous joke her foolish uncle made about our meeting again. Well, I must tell this, I want some one to say it to. I was passing close to a small Bungalow in a hired *Gharri* I have—my luggage was all in it, as usual. I heard a singular wailing noise, a young fellow who said he was an army doctor came running out, and asked if I had any salts or any *eau de Cologne* with me. By the merest chance there was some in my dressing-bag.

" 'It's for a poor lady whose sister has only died two or three hours ago; died quite suddenly of heart complaint. She is very faint; I want some salts for her.'

" While he and I were hauling my things out of the bag, a man came out, and the instant I saw him I recognized 'Tammy's' uncle.

" I could not tell which of the sisters had died,

The poor old fellow was full of lamentation, but said nothing coherent. In another minute, an Ayah, and some other female-servants, led out a lady. I had but to glance at her to tell which of them it was. They fanned her and gave her some of my *eau de Cologne*. Poor creature! The foolish, commonplace old uncle, and that sister so inferior to the other were before me—It was Tammy who was gone.

“I told the young doctor I was acquainted with them. I don’t know whether the uncle recognized me or not. He kept shaking hands with me and saying, poor man, ‘that he did not know how it was, but he could not come to his bearings; but for her to die at dawn and be buried at sunset was a thing he could not endure.’

“I asked the doctor if I might see her, and he pushed aside that kind of Venetian blind, that they have here, the *tatta*, and I was in the room with *it*.

“I came on. It quite took my breath away. And there was such silence.

“I have often seen beautiful sights; but that—

“Her long hair was spread over her arms and down her sides: and her hands were folded on her breast. She had a white robe on and looked like those marble figures that one sees on a tomb, but for the smile.

“I have never in life seen anything that was so holy, and so rapturous.

“I felt as if she could not possibly be gone,

because as I looked and moved the expression of her face appeared to change.

"I went back to her sister, made her recognize me, and asked if I might go into the room again, and if I might kiss her.

"They wanted me to go to the funeral, so, of course, I went. And then I remained, and did what I could for them for some days.

"I was miserable, it made me fancy all sorts of things.

"It seems that it was known to be bad for her to do any sort of climbing and once in an elevated spot she had fainted before, and been a long time coming round again. And she only went up that last time such a little way. You can easily imagine how sorry I am.

"Your affectionate brother,

"F. C."

CHAPTER IX.

"I HAVE BROUGHT HER HOME.

THE little lodgings.

Andrew entered and tried to look as if he had not known that Daisy would be there.

She was standing in the middle of the small parlor, had the fan in her hand that his mother had sent, and which had only just been given to her, and she was looking at it as if deep in thought.

Sometime ago she had said to her mother :
"Cousin Mary is just like other people."

When she saw Andrew, her face lost that thoughtful look, but the gift still pleased her. "Cousin Mary," she now thought, "is like all the Cappers—why, she never gave me a present before ! and now she has sent me this lovely thing because we are poor."

There was nothing very remarkable said during that pleasant little meal, but it seemed quite a new and superior sort of occasion to Andrew and to Daisy ; the former felt surely that he was making himself as agreeable as he knew how ; the latter thought, when her thoughts turned on herself at

all, "It will be dull teaching those children after having had a dip into the old life again." And sometimes she smiled as Andrew thought delightfully and sometimes there was a whimsical little touch of pathos after the smile that made him wonder what it meant.

As for Cousin Daisy, the occasion was not so soul-stirring to her: she was rather absent, leaned back in her chair and said but little.

The reason was that Algernon had written at last.

Bell was much better, indeed, she seemed almost well; but both the doctors had said it would be a great advantage to her to have her mother with her for a while.

He hoped he might count on her setting off that day week.

She had said nothing to Daisy about this yet.

In the meantime, Daisy had not any permanent "situation." Mrs. Belmore's governess was only away nursing a brother. He could not (one way or the other) want nursing *much* longer. He must die soon or get well.

Still Mrs. Smith was a truly religious woman, and she carried her religion out into common life. It was a pity that no relation and no old friend had proposed that Daisy should pay him or her a visit—and it was a pity that no desirable "situation" had been met with, but she trusted that something would be found that was suitable.

She woke up to common life and remembered that the young people were talking beside her.

Andrew was saying to Daisy as he spoke of some young fellow who had been one of their many suitors :

“ I thought he belonged to Bell.”

“ Oh, no,” said Daisy.

“ One of your many lovers, then ; their name is legion.”

Daisy drew herself up.

“ I never had a lover in my life. Never. But Bell, as you very well know, used to say that if she thought any one really loved her for her own sake, she must at once begin to love him out of gratitude. I don't think that was so very foolish. That was why she married Algernon—she thought he loved her.”

“ And you, Daisy,” Andrew asked with a certain deference. “ Would such a belief have any weight with you ? ”

There was something in the tone of the young Squire's voice, and in the expression of his face which struck Mrs. E. Smith forcibly.

But she corrected herself with the thought : “ If he had meant anything by it, he never would have said it before me.”

The sun, as his last little rim of crimson was going under, appeared to wait an instant for Daisy's answer.

Her face had covered itself with blushes ; in spite of herself the words would appear to have a personal application ; but no, there was nothing to say, and when the sun sank under, she thought, “ I need not answer at all.” And she rose and said “ Mother,

you wished for some music. Shall I ring to have the tea-things cleared away."

Mrs. Capper as she sat at breakfast one morning, with Tom and a couple of visitors, thought, "Andrew has been away now five days." She took up her letters, noticed that one of them was a thick letter, and that it was from him.

Andrew was by no means a good correspondent, he wrote frequently enough to his mother, when he was away, that she might always be able to get at him if he was wanted—but one sheet of note paper was all he ever required, and sometimes only one page or so of that.

"Yes," was her mental comment on the thick letter—"I said so !"

She put it down without opening it. He had made it manifest in his first letter from that little seaside place, that there was nothing to do and nothing to interest him but Daisy and her mother. And yet he had been at the little hotel several days. It does not take so long to express regret to a distant relative for her loss of fortune, to give her a paper case, and her daughter a fan.

Mrs. Capper went to her little morning-room, when breakfast was over, and Tom had gone into the garden, and as she drew out the folded sheets, before she opened them, her eyes fell on these words :

"And scarcely anything in my happiness, dear mother, gives me more pleasure than that you will be so glad.

"I delight in thinking (such a mother as you have always been to me) that I am not going to bring you home a stranger, who knows nothing about you, and whom perhaps you would not like, but the very girl whom you always wished for, and most wanted me to love."

Thus, before she had even unfolded the letter Mrs. Capper knew all, and her first thought was, "I will be what he thinks me."

Two or three tears started in her eyes.—No mother wants a deeply-loved son to take himself away from her, in so far as he gives himself to another woman.

But Mrs. Capper was improving so fast that this feeling was almost all that was left of her former self.

"Now stop," she exclaimed addressing herself. "I did wish for her, I did want him to try and win her.—I did enlarge on her artlessness, her unworldly freedom from ambition, and her sweet temper, and it is perfectly true that, all other things being equal, I would rather have had her for a daughter in-law than any other girl in the world.

"Yes, but they are not equal. She is not her own equal now. She was a great heiress, and now she has hardly a shilling.

"But then with the encumbrance, as he thought it. of all that attendance—those footmen and maids and horses and carriages, the fuss made, the other aspirants not *merely* for what she had but for her great expectations—he would not have come forward at all! He has plenty, and let me be just.—She will

never try to prevent him from doing as much as he wishes for his brothers."

Then she read the letter.

There was a good deal of rhapsody, but the mother was not displeased at that.

"Yes," she said as she folded it. "I have not lost my son and I shall have a daughter. Do I know as much, so that I can say as much, of any other girl whatever. And her manner to me was always full of that pretty deference that now one so seldom sees.—Yes," she said again and the tears started in her eyes. "Perhaps my boys think because I never feel able to mention my own little Daisy, my one girl, that she is seldom in my thoughts. But Andrew and Fergus must remember her perfectly well. To live only six months, and almost break my heart when she went to God! I do like to hear my boys using familiarly that name we gave her, after this Daisy's mother, and I do take the more interest in her on account of my little only one.

"Yes, I want this Daisy, and I will make her truly welcome.

"Now is my time.

"I will make that true for good which he says affectionately, and feels for the moment.

"I will write at once and ask her mother to let him escort her here as soon as *she* goes to Germany—and it shall be true, for I can make it so, *that I have gained a daughter—without losing a son.*"

.

It may have been a week perhaps after this that Mr. Callender, coming up to the back premises at Swandean, observed something unusual. It was, in fact, the open carriage, an equipage hardly ever used.

The coachman in his full livery was already in his place, and Terence the footman was joining him.

"What's up?" he inquired as it drove off.

"Well, to say Squire's coming home would not answer you, Mr. Callender," said Saunders, who was looking on, "because it ain't his way to drive in that there carriage."

- "Nor his Ma's either," said Mr. Callender. She likes a little bit of a rattletrap of a pony shay a sight better, does the mistress."

"And that's just it," said Mr. Saunders, "the mistress ordered that carriage herself. "Said she to John Coachman, 'you'll bring it round and I'll get in at my own house. I'm going to meet the 3.30 train, and mind, John, you're in good time.' He's such a one to hold his peace that I never might ha' known—but I went up and heard it. So I just asked if the young master was coming, and if he would dine at the Dower House, for when he does I always takes the liberty to go over and help to wait."

"Dull it is, when he's away so long," remarked the cook—"and the mistress wished I'd send over an ice pudding."

"Visitors, then?"

"To be sure, coming with Squire."

"Well, I never knew her to go to the station to meet any living soul before."

"True for you, Mr. Callender," said the cook withdrawing her face from the larder window and retreating to her kitchen.

"I've heard talk that Mrs. Smith's expected—you may depend, as she's lost all that great fortune the mistress is going out of her way to show her this extra respect."

Mr. Saunders smiled.

"Mrs. Smith, as I hear, have started for Homberg."

"And the mistress going to the station herself!"

"Well, the young Squire's the best of sons, and have endeared himself to everybody."

"But," interrupted Mr. Callender, "the mistress did not go to meet him when he came from foreign parts. Why in nature should she go now?"

"Why, that I can't tell. I'll tell you who it is he's got with him, if you like."

"Well, who is it?"

"Why, Miss Daisy!"

For a moment Callender said nothing; then after a gasp he gave the reason.—"Well, there's not a word I can lay my tongue to, as 'll satisfy my notion of all that this here means."

The cook again put out her face. "It manes, Mr. Callender, all anything airthly can mane, and I'm sending over clear soup, and a *salmi* according."

The gardener sat down on the bench outside the

larder window while Mr. Saunders continued to lean at his ease against the door.

"Just my luck," he presently said, "no home has that family at present. Like as not it'll be acted here, and like as not they'll not be able to fix it all up till Christmas, and I shall have nothing but a beggarly lot of Roman hyacinths and a score or two of lilies. Whereas as if it had been within the next month or six weeks I could have fairly smothered the house with camellias, and chrysanthemums and what not, ay, I could ; smothered it, and the church too as soon as look at it."

.

It was a most lovely afternoon early in October, and so still that the great plane leaves, lying thickly in the road and in the drives, never stirred. Daisy sat beside Mrs. Capper, with an air so modest, that it was even shy. All was so strange, and this was a true lover ; he wanted her for herself alone—in fact she had nothing else to give.

Andrew sat opposite, she looked all that he could wish, so did the place, and so did the peaceful, happy sky.

They turned up the drive to the Dower House. Tom was in his chair, come out to greet Daisy ; she alighted, and stepped on a pace or two to meet him.

Andrew turned ; he had not expected that this particular form of welcome would be given to his intended bride. It had a greater effect ever after than even Mrs. Capper could have hoped.

He kissed his mother and said : " Oh, mamma, thank you ! "

.

Andrew had withdrawn to his own home, he was coming again shortly to dine at his mother's.

He was now overhauling with great vigor and fervor, a quantity of the fine silks, muslins, and trinkets that he had brought from the East.

He was going to bring some of them over with him, and, metaphorically fling them at Daisy's feet.

" Extraordinary," he exclaimed, " that I should have collected all these things. Ah, there's that real, old, Trichinopoly chain, and the bracelets—and yet, I never thought of her, nor any other girl when I did it (that chain shall go round her neck this very night).

" This is Kismet—No, I had better say Providence. She is the very girl, the only one for me—yes. I am thankful. But who could have expected that she would be so shy about it all."

.

In the meantime, Mrs. Capper had taken up Daisy to her room.

She had no maid with her, so Mrs. Capper's maid had laid out her gloves, and the gown she was to wear that evening, and had put two or three flowers for her hair in a glass on the dressing-table.

Cousin Mary was sitting in an easy-chair, looking on.

It was not time to dress yet, and the maid withdrew.

Then Daisy, who looked very shy—not painfully but sweetly shy—came up to her, and kneeling put her arms about her; leaned her blushing face on Mrs. Capper's shoulder and whispered: "I wanted to thank you for the fan, Cousin Mary."

"The fan?"

"It meant—I thought afterwards it meant that I might say 'yes.'"

"Kiss me, my sweet," said Cousin Mary.

Daisy lifted her face, Andrew's mother kissed her as much for his sake as for the babe's whom she had so deeply loved. Then she said: "I have no need to ask. I see, I know, Daisy, that you are happy."

Then Daisy laughed, with artless joy, and, as if it was a very wonderful thing to say, answered,

"He loves me."

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